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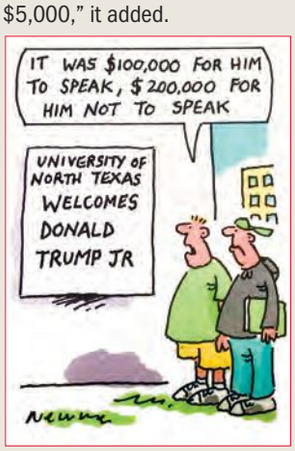
THE WEEK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

● ● ● As *Times Higher Education* went to press, British universities were anxiously awaiting details of the UK's plans for future participation in the European Union's science programmes. *The Times* reported on 4 September that the country would offer to pay more than £1 billion a year post Brexit to stay in research programmes such as Horizon 2020. According to the newspaper, the proposal was due to be set out in the latest of a series of Brexit "position papers" to be published on 6 September. The paper was also expected to note that Horizon 2020 already has non-EU "associate members" such as Israel, Norway and Switzerland. Less clear was whether the paper would point out that to take part, countries such as Switzerland also abide by freedom of movement rules – a big potential stumbling block to any UK attempt to continue to participate in the scheme.

● ● ● A university in Canada lost almost C$12 million (£7.5 million) to an email phishing scam. Staff at MacEwan University in Edmonton unwittingly paid millions into a fraudulently created bank account after an email convinced them that legitimate bank details for a client had changed, the BBC reported on 31 August. Most of the money has been traced to accounts in Hong Kong and Montreal, and the funds have been frozen while lawyers try to recover the money. "There is never a good time for something like this to happen," university spokesman David Beharry said in a statement. "As our students come back to start the new academic year, we want to assure them and the community that our IT systems were not compromised during this incident." An initial internal investigation has found that the processes for changing banking information were "inadequate" and that staff had missed opportunities to identify the fraud, the BBC report said.

● ● ● Donald Trump found a way to make money out of higher education via Trump University – although the resulting legal settlement suggests that it was less than a model approach – and his son has managed to do the same. Donald Trump Jr will be paid $100,000 (£77,000) to speak at the University of North Texas in October, giving a 30-minute speech and taking a 30-minute Q&A session (with questions submitted in advance), campus newspaper *North Texas Daily* found through a Freedom of Information request. "According to the contracts, along with his payment, Trump Jr. will receive lodging, meals and travel accommodations on behalf of UNT at a maximum total cost of $5,000," it added.



● ● ● Betsy DeVos, the US education secretary, has appointed Julian Schmoke, a former official at for-profit DeVry University, to lead the Department of Education's Student Aid Enforcement Unit, which is aimed at tackling fraud by universities, the website Politico reported on 30 August. "DeVry's parent company, which has since rebranded as Adtalem Global Education, last year agreed to pay $100 million to resolve allegations by the Federal Trade Commission that the for-profit college company misled students about their job and salary prospects," it added. The company also settled with the Department of Education over similar claims, and "Obama administration officials cited those cases against DeVry as they announced the formation of the Student Aid Unit last year". On learning of Mr Schmoke's appointment, Democratic Senator Chris Murphy tweeted, "This is a joke, right?", and his colleague Elizabeth Warren followed up by asking whether Ms DeVos was "trolling us". Clearly Ms DeVos believes that when it comes to leading a unit set up to tackle fraud, a former DeVry official should know the territory.

● ● ● A University of Cambridge student who burned a £20 note in front of a homeless man will not be expelled. Pembroke College had come under pressure to eject Ronald Coyne over the incident in February, in which he was filmed, wearing a bow tie and coat-tails, setting the money alight in front of the rough sleeper. However, he has kept his place at the college after writing a public note of apology in which he sets out how he is trying to "remedy some of the hurt caused by my actions", *The Sun* reported. "I have addressed the root causes of my behaviour by attending awareness classes, relating to both alcohol and social inclusion," he says. He also reveals in the letter that threats of violence have been sent to his family home over the incident.

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National treasures

The UK has a remarkably strong university system that makes it a world-leading player, and it requires tending, not trashing

Reading your own obituary "concentrates the mind". So said Christopher Hitchens a year before his death in 2010.

Speaking at the New York Public Library, the critic and journalist recalled reading about "the late Christopher Hitchens" in an art exhibition catalogue.

He was, he noted, in good company, with the likes of Mark Twain and Alfred Nobel also having outlived published obituaries.

In the case of the latter, Hitchens said, it "changed his life – when Nobel read his obituary, it said that he had been a warmonger and a dynamite maker, so he went straight and endorsed a boring peace prize".

The point, he said, is that one way or another, seeing one's own demise reported in black and white has a powerful impact.

If it is a little strong to suggest that UK universities have been reading their own obituaries in recent months, it's not a million miles from the truth.

University-bashing has become the national sport – one the country is actually quite good at, for a change.

The system has been described by the prime minister's former special adviser as a "Ponzi scheme"; politicians have lambasted high pay and accused vice-chancellors of forming a "cartel"; and the Institute for Fiscal Studies has calculated that the poorest students in England will leave university with debts of almost £60,000.

There is a growing crisis of trust in universities' ability to deliver "value for money", and a crisis of identity among academics, who do not believe that higher education can be measured in such terms.

Meanwhile, the Home Office has been using grossly inaccurate figures to wage a relentless campaign against "problem" international students overstaying their visas, while newspapers continue to publish highly critical stories such as the false claim that universities discriminate against UK applicants so they can recruit more lucrative overseas students.

In short, it has been open season, and universities have found their ability to deflect, refute or curtail the barrage to be limited – and that's if we are being polite about it.

These criticisms might not collectively add up to an obituary. But the risk is that they contribute to momentum for changes in the funding and regulation of UK universities that limits their ability to be world-leading in research (arguably the best in terms of bang for buck) and transformational for students regardless of their background.

Throw in the destabilisation threatened by Brexit, and it's clear that UK universities are on the ropes.

Which is why the somewhat counter-intuitive double-header at the top of this year's *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings – with the University of Oxford retaining top place and the University of Cambridge beating Stanford University and the California Institute of Technology into second – affords a valuable opportunity to take stock of how extraordinarily good the country's leading universities are.

This is not just about Oxbridge, either. The UK has 31 institutions in the top 200, and although half of these lost ground, many of the country's best held steady in the face of exceptionally strong global competition.

Given the levels of investment in higher education elsewhere, and the lengths that many governments go to in order to support and bolster their best universities, this is a remarkable performance.

It's also a timely reminder that whether certain people like it or not, Britain's global identity – its prestige and its place in a world that is connected and that shares vital values and aspirations – is linked as closely to the strength of its universities as it is to anything else.

It's a point that was well made by Louise Richardson, vice-chancellor of Oxford, in her speech at the *THE* World Academic Summit earlier this week.

Reports of UK higher education being in some sort of death spiral may be overstated. But the sense that there are those who would rejoice in its downfall should be taken very seriously. The health of universities cannot be taken for granted, and if it fails, the health of the country fails with it.

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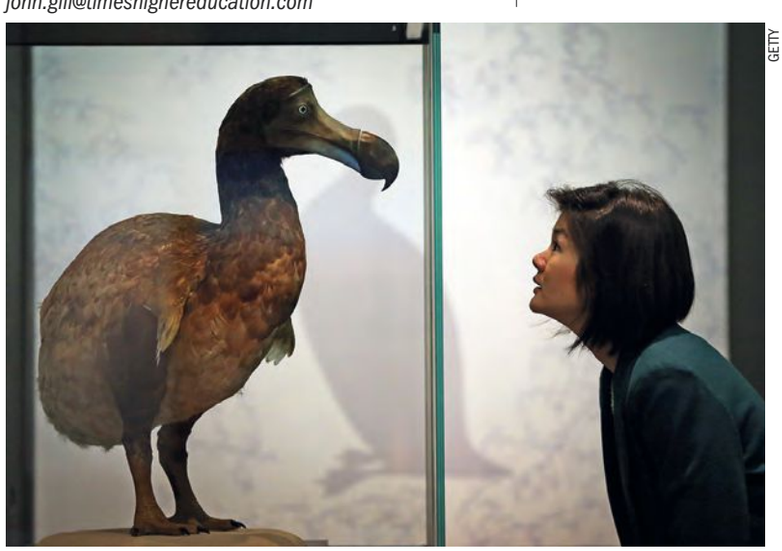
> **"These criticisms contribute to momentum against UK universities that are funded and regulated in a way that allows them to be world-leading in research and transformational for students"**



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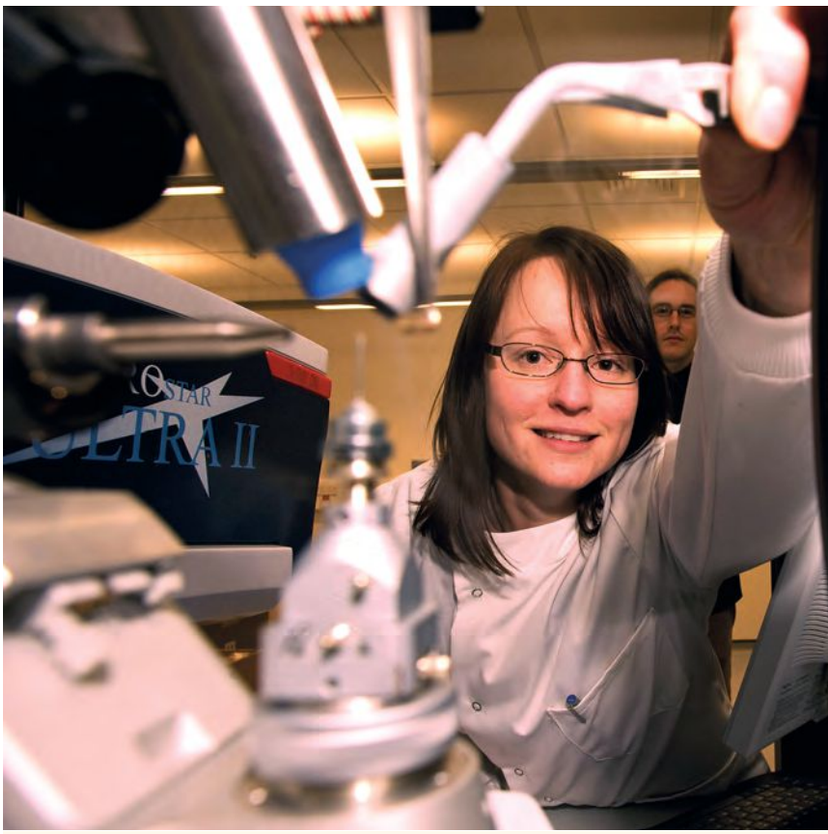
THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

Oxford and Cambridge top world rankings

Institutions sound note of caution over Brexit's impact. Ellie Bothwell and Jack Grove write



Best in class Oxford held the top spot, while improved research income at Cambridge

The UK is home to the top two institutions in the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings for the first time in the 14-year history of the table.

The University of Oxford has held on to the number one spot for the second year in a row, while the University of Cambridge has jumped from fourth to second.

Cambridge's rise comes at the expense of the California Institute of Technology, which was number one between 2012 and 2016, number two last year, and now shares third position with Stanford.

One reason for the movement is that Cambridge's research income and research quality improved this year, while Caltech and Stanford were hurt by drops to their PhD-to-bachelor's ratios. Caltech also received a much more modest rise in its research income per academic staff member compared with the other three institutions.

The US universities' institutional income also dropped by 23 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively, while Cambridge and Oxford each received a boost in revenue (by 11 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively).

Louise Richardson, Oxford's vice-chancellor, said she was "delighted that Oxford has held its position at the top of these global rankings".

"To be judged the best university in the world for the second successive year, against a backdrop in which Britain's role in the world is uncertain and the place of universities in society open to question, will be a great source of pride for everyone at Oxford, and, I hope, for the whole country," said Professor Richardson.

"Success in our field is never an accident," she added, stating it is "achieved by a relentless pursuit of excellence, creative brilliance and a deep commitment to our enduring values".

Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Cambridge's vice-chancellor, said the result confirms that the university "is among a small group of the most respected higher education institutions globally."

"We welcome the fact that UK institutions feature so highly in this year's rankings, demonstrating their continued importance to the country and its economy," Sir Leszek added.

Professor Richardson's comments highlight the risk that Brexit may pose to the global position of the UK's leading universities.

Almost a quarter of Cambridge's research funding from competitive grants comes from the EU, while the proportion at the University of Oxford is about a fifth.

Other institutions within the UK's Russell Group, of whom 23 out of 24 feature in our top 200, with Queen's University Belfast standing between 200 and 250, will also have concerns over the potential loss of EU research funding. Overall, 31 UK institutions feature in the top 200 and 93 are in the top 1,000.

This year, most Russell Group institutions held their position compared with last year's standings – with a handful registering modest climbs or falls in our tables.

Sir Anton Muscatelli, vice-chancellor of the University of Glasgow (up to joint 80th from 88th in 2016), who is also chair of the Russell Group, said the performance of the group's members needed to be viewed in light of challenge posed by China and other Asia nations investing far higher percentages of GDP into higher education than the UK.

"Considering how fast other countries are improving their university systems it is fantastic to see so many Russell Group institutions feature in the top 100 and 200," he said, adding, however, that the UK "cannot take its success for granted nor rest on its laurels".

The latest table suggests that the US and Australia's standing in the table in future years could also be threatened. Nearly all of the US' top-200 representatives (59 out of 62) faced drops in their research income

WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2018: TOP 10

2018 rank	2017 rank	University	Country
1	1	University of Oxford	United Kingdom
2	4	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
=3	2	California Institute of Technology	United States
=3	3	Stanford University	United States
5	5	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	United States
6	6	Harvard University	United States
7	7	Princeton University	United States
8	8	Imperial College London	United Kingdom
9	=10	University of Chicago	United States
=10	9	ETH Zurich – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich	Switzerland
=10	13	University of Pennsylvania	United States


ALAMY

helped it rise from fourth to second place

per academic staff member and future levels of federal research income under the Trump administration are in doubt.

Two-fifths of the universities in this elite group (29) have dropped ranks.

Meanwhile, although Australia has maintained a relatively steady performance, its position in future years may suffer if the government goes ahead with plans to cut funding by 2.5 per cent, which would result in an A$2.8 billion (£1.7 billion) loss in income across the sector.

Both countries, as well as nations in Europe, face competition from rapidly rising institutions in Asia.

Peking University has risen two places to joint 27th, which puts it on a par with New York University and the University of Edinburgh and ahead of the Karolinska Institute.

Tsinghua University has climbed five places to 30th, overtaking the University of Melbourne, Georgia Institute of Technology, LMU Munich and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne.

Both those Chinese institutions have improved in terms of their reputations for teaching and research this year – meaning there are now three Asian universities in the top 30 of the rankings for the first time under the current methodology.

Asia's top university, the National University of Singapore, has risen two places to joint 22nd, meaning it is level with the University of Toronto and now outranks Carnegie Mellon University. Its president, Tan Chorh-Chuan, said he was "delighted by [this] strong endorsement of the global reputation, high quality and deep impact of NUS' education and research".

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2018 RANKINGS: MOST REPRESENTED COUNTRIES IN TOP 200

Country/region	Number of universities	Best university	Best rank
United States	62	California Institute of Technology	=3
		Stanford University	=3
United Kingdom	31	University of Oxford	1
Germany	20	LMU Munich	=34
Netherlands	13	University of Amsterdam	59
Australia	8	University of Melbourne	32
China	7	Peking University	=27
Switzerland	7	ETH Zurich – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich	=10
Canada	6	University of Toronto	=22
France	6	Paris Sciences et Lettres – PSL Research University Paris	=72
Sweden	6	Karolinska Institute	=38
Hong Kong	5	University of Hong Kong	40
Belgium	4	KU Leuven	47
South Korea	4	Seoul National University	=74
Denmark	3	Aarhus University	=109
		University of Copenhagen	=109

Richardson turns on 'tawdry' MPs

V-c says 'mendacious' stories are undermining universities. Holly Else and John Morgan report

The vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford has warned that "mendacious media and tawdry politicians" are determined to undermine the British higher education sector, and has called on academics around the world to resist the "acceptance of a post-truth world".

Speaking at the *Times Higher Education* World Academic Summit, held at King's College London, Louise Richardson (pictured inset) warned that the future prosperity of the UK's higher education sector was being endangered by frenzied debate about tuition fees and vice-chancellors' salaries.

"We have been getting a rough ride lately, and certainly some mendacious media and tawdry politicians seem determined to do their utmost to damage one of the most successful – and globally admired – sectors of the British economy," she said.

Answering a question from the Press Association after her address, Professor Richardson said it was "completely mendacious" of politicians "to suggest that vice-chancellors have raided the £9,000 fee to enhance their own salaries".

"We know that the £9,000 fee was to substitute for the withdrawal of government funding," she said.

Professor Richardson said her pay, which she put at £350,000, was "a very high salary compared to our academics". But she said that vice-chancellors "operate in a global marketplace" and university presidents' salaries in the US are far higher.

She said that she hoped that the "spurious" correlations between fees and executive salaries would end, "not because it's embarrassing for me and my colleagues, but because it's damaging" to the reputation of UK higher education.

In her speech, Professor Richardson said that the reduction of public funding for higher education in many countries worldwide, and the increase in tuition fees to make up for the shortfall, was damaging. "This is leaving students with significant debt...but it also spreads the notion that students are consumers with all the implications that has for their relationship with their university," Professor Richardson said.

She described comments made by the new chairman of the UK's Education Select Committee, Robert Halfon, that the purpose of going to university and taking out a loan was to get a high-paid job at the end of it, as "extraordinary".

"It seems to me that Mr Halfon has completely missed the point of going to university, but unfortunately he is not alone," she said.

Professor Richardson admitted that the situation in the UK was "pale in comparison" to Turkey, where the government has closed campuses and fired thousands of academics following a failed coup, or in Hungary, where prime minister Viktor Orbán has rushed through legislation designed to force the Central European University to close.

"One of the most troubling aspects" of recent election results around the world, Professor Richardson continued, was "the gap they revealed between universities and the rest of the country", highlighting how many voters for Brexit and US president Donald Trump did not have a degree. "This is potentially a real problem for universities who rely on public support for our ability to operate," she added.

Professor Richardson concluded: "If we are to maintain public support we must be – and be seen to be – fair in our admissions procedures, transparent in our governance, consistent in our defence of the principles we espouse. And we must vehemently resist alternative facts and the acceptance of a post-truth world."

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Will German election lead to push for tuition fees?

Party manifestos too vague on higher education, say university leaders. David Matthews reports

ALAMY

Squeezed Merkel's CDU wants to keep tuition free but its main rivals disagree

Germany's federal elections appear to be heading towards a reassuringly dull conclusion. Unless the polls change dramatically, Angela Merkel looks set to win a fourth consecutive term as chancellor on 24 September.

It would be difficult to claim that universities, students and science have dominated the debate so far. Defence spending, refugees, Donald Trump, and even the alleged dangers of English-speaking hipster ghettos in Berlin seem to have received more airtime than higher education.

University leaders are tearing their hair out over the lack of debate, despite spying looming funding problems. Parties' manifestos have been "disappointing" and "vague", Horst Hippler, president of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), has said.

Still, the policy that German higher education is probably best known for in the English-speaking world – free university tuition – could suffer at least a symbolic setback, depending on the results.

Although Ms Merkel's Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian allies seem all but certain to emerge as the largest party, who will join them as junior partners in coalition government is up for grabs.

One contender is the economically liberal Free Democratic Party, whose manifesto supports the introduction of tuition fees to better finance university teaching. It does not say how high fees would be, and wants payments contingent on graduate income, rather like in the UK.

However, tuition fees are decided by states, explained Tobias Schmohl, a senior researcher at the University of Hamburg's Centre for University Teaching and Learning, meaning that the FDP "are talking about something they can't decide on at that [federal] level".

Still, he thinks that if the FDP were included in federal government, it could nonetheless try to push states to introduce fees, particularly for students from outside the EU. In places, this is already happening: Baden-Württemberg has already done so this academic year, under a CDU-Green coalition, while a CDU-FDP coalition also wants to follow suit in North Rhine-Westphalia with annual fees of €1,500 (£1,380).

The FDP, led by Christian Lindner (pictured below right), also wants to create a nationwide system that attaches a set amount of funding to each student, regardless of where they study, equalising teaching resources from state to state. Echoing government rhetoric seen in England when creating more of a competitive market between universities, it wants the "money to follow the student". A good showing for the party on 24 September could tip Germany's higher education system in a more Anglo-American direction – if Ms Merkel's CDU permits it (the party's manifesto is very tight-lipped on these issues).

Meanwhile, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which is the CDU's current junior coalition partner and hovering in the mid-twenties in polls, has explicitly pledged to keep university education free. It also wants an online "Open University", available to everyone, not just those who have passed Germany's Abitur university entrance exams. Indeed, one of the few things that unites most of Germany's parties is the often rather vague promises to promote the "digitalisation" of universities and education more generally.

"Education is a key subject in the campaign but the focus is almost exclusively on early childhood and school education," said Jörg Dräger, chief executive of the Centre for Higher Education, a thinktank. Higher education is hard to "emotionalise" in politics, he said, and "there is a shortage of renowned science politicians. The political positions of German parties hardly vary in higher education."

The elephant in the room for German universities is that, after 2020, a big chunk of their funding stream becomes uncertain. In 2007, the state and federal governments agreed to pump billions of extra euros into universities to deal with increased student numbers, but universities now want this arrangement made permanent (it now constitutes a quarter of the budgets of some universities of applied sciences, according to the HRK). The temporary nature of the funding makes hiring permanent professors difficult; meanwhile universities estimate that they will have a €29 billion building renovation backlog by 2025.


GETTY

The federal government could tie renewed funds to all kinds of conditions. The CDU manifesto gives scant detail, but says it will use a successor agreement to strengthen good teaching – a long-standing concern is that universities could do more to improve teaching – and digital innovation. The SPD has made rather more encouraging noises about strengthening universities' basic funding and making the current, temporary funding more permanent and secure.

"Indications are that adequate, ongoing and hence reliable funding growth for universities does not appear likely even after the election," said the HRK's Professor Hippler in a statement at the end of August.

But for researchers in Germany's non-university sector, such as Max Planck institutes, things look rather more rosy. According to Dr Schmohl, there is no serious political challenge to the German policy of steadily increasing funding for these research centres and the country's national research funding council (this budget is currently set to increase 3 per cent a year until 2020).

Meanwhile, Germany's Excellence Initiative, designed to create "elite" universities and research clusters as in the UK and US, is mentioned only by the Left party, which wants it scrapped but seems unlikely to join any governing coalition, and the FDP, which wants a similar scheme for professional education. Such an important change to German higher education "should be part of the political discussion but is not," said Dr Dräger.

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UK ‘at the bottom’ of international salary league, says UUK president

Pay ‘furore’ could deter top researchers from coming to UK, Janet Beer tells John Morgan

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Competitive market academics working for the public good should not have to take a pay cut, argues UUK’s Janet Beer

The “furore” around the pay of universities’ senior leaders could deter high-profile researchers from coming to the UK, while Wales’ “very sensible” generous living cost support for students could offer a model for England if successful, according to the new Universities UK president.

Janet Beer, the University of Liverpool vice-chancellor who took up her UUK post last month, said she did not think that the organisation “would propose that we would do anything about fees” in England, arguing that the issue of maintenance funding was far more important for students and widening participation.

She spoke to *Times Higher Education* ahead of UUK’s annual conference, on 6-7 September.

On the question of vice-chancellors’ pay – where Labour peer Lord Adonis has generated much critical media coverage – she said that the UK is “at the bottom” of the international pay league.

“We run large, complex organisations and we are working in an internationalised environment” in terms of the recruitment market, she added.

Following Lord Adonis’ interventions, universities minister Jo Johnson has said that institutions must “justify the exceptional circumstances” for pay awards exceeding the prime minister’s £150,000 salary.

Professor Beer highlighted the salaries needed to attract leading researchers from overseas in fields such as medical science and materials discovery. She feared that they “will be put off coming to work in our universities for the public good, by this furore around people being awarded what [critics] are calling salaries that are somehow not appropriate for people who are working for the public good”.

Although many researchers take a pay cut to work in the UK, “I don’t think that they should have to take so substantial a pay cut, below some… arbitrary number like £150,000, in order to do work here that will change the world,” Professor Beer said.

But should there be greater transparency about how remuneration committees make their decisions on vice-chancellors’ pay?

“The Committee of University Chairs have got that in hand,” said Professor Beer, whose Liverpool salary was £300,500 in 2015-16. “They need to be very clear about the way in which this works. I think that there is transparency.”

She said that benchmarking also suggests that roles such as university finance directors and human resources directors are below peers in the private sector.

“People make sacrifices to work in universities,” she said, adding: “I’m not suggesting that I’m hard done by or that I’m not very well paid.”

Professor Beer also said that this was “not to say that we could not be better at explaining, and indeed at demonstrating, that we adhere to all the best principles of governance”.

Welsh funding system ‘very sensible’

Asked about Labour’s election pledge to abolish fees in England, Professor Beer said that it “sounds like an attractive proposition, but we need to be clear about the fact that it is not a progressive one, because the people who would benefit most from it are the middle classes, are the affluent students”.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies recently highlighted the regressive nature of the Conservative government’s moves to abolish maintenance grants and retrospectively freeze the loan repayment threshold (the latter change backed by UUK).

Professor Beer highlighted the Welsh government’s moves to switch public funding away from fee subsidies to generous maintenance grants and loans.

“I think that it will be very interesting to see what happens in terms of the Welsh government’s adoption of the Diamond recommendations, where it looks to me like they have taken the best bits of other funding systems and they have put them together in a very sensible package,” she said, calling the Welsh system “very interesting for the rest of us”.

Professor Beer added that in England, where annual fees rose to £9,250 this year, “we do have to talk about maintenance grants, I think we do have to talk about the repayment threshold, I think we do have to talk about the interest rates. And we would be derelict if we didn’t.”

What is needed in England is a “consistent and predictable system of funding” that ensures student number controls do not return, she continued.

“So I don’t think we would propose that we would do anything about fees. Where students feel it is in…the pound in their pocket – it’s what they have to spend day to day. I think that the fees are neither here nor there, as long as they are [in] proportion.”

Professor Beer, who specialises in the study of the American novelist Edith Wharton in her academic career, takes over as president as UUK prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary, having formed as the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in 1918.

Her aim as president is to stress that universities are “crucial anchor institutions in every bit of the four nations of the UK”, which she said will involve “getting out into parts of our communities that we don’t normally touch” as universities.

A former vice-chancellor of Oxford Brookes University who has worked at Warwick, Roehampton and Manchester Metropolitan universities, Professor Beer’s background might help her to span a sector that many fear is increasingly stratified by government policy.

“I wrote to all vice-chancellors on my first day and said…I thought that we had more in common, more to unite us, than could divide us,” she said.

“Higher education has a higher purpose: that is about education, discovery, values as well as being about giving people the wherewithal to earn a good living. I don’t think that we should forget that.”

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THE WORLD ACADEMIC SUMMIT

Paul Nurse: research relies on 'freedom of action and movement'


GETTY

Trying to rush through the translation of research discoveries into practical applications can harm the scientific process, according to Sir Paul Nurse.

Speaking at the *Times Higher Education* World Academic Summit, the Nobel laureate (pictured right) added that research "thrives" when scientists are free to pursue their interests.

"To rush into translation may result in becoming lost in translation," he said at the event, hosted by King's College London between 3 and 5 September.

Sir Paul, who is the chief executive and director of the Francis Crick Institute in London, added that there is a danger that direction is "applied too early" with some translational activities, which are designed to bridge the divide between curiosity research and the application of research to develop new products and processes.

If policies direct research to achieve a specific objective too soon, scientists may not respond to the self-correcting mechanisms that are "crucial" for the scientific process, he explained.

Examples of these self-correcting mechanisms are when "research changes direction as a consequence of new data, ideas and hypotheses". Missing these cues leads to "wasting effort to the ultimate detriment of the long-term objectives", he added.

"A researcher who is too strongly directed, or whose thoughts are restrained is unlikely to be fully effective in research. Similarly, in my view, societies which do not encourage freedom will find it harder to excel in research," Sir Paul said.

The joint winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine continued: "A major pillar for promoting excellence is the empowerment of the individual researcher, and whenever possible to minimise top-down programmatic interference."

The research systems that are most effective at producing knowledge for the public good "are characterised by freedom of action and movement", he said. "There needs to be permeability and fluidity, allowing the ready transfer of ideas, skills and people in all directions between the different sectors, research disciplines and various parts of the research endeavour," he added.

"Artificial barriers which reduce permeability or mutual respect between the different parts of the system, such as Brexit for example, should be resisted, as they reduce the effectiveness of the research system – both to produce knowledge and for the effective use of that knowledge for applications," Sir Paul said.

"Research systems thrive on excellent research scientists who are strongly motivated, most often by a great curiosity and by freedom to pursue their intellectual interests," he added.

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Industrial strategy

UK life sciences to get £146 million boost in industrial strategy

The UK government is to invest more than £140 million in the life sciences over four years as part of its industrial strategy.

The funding, unveiled at the University of Birmingham on 30 August, will support five new major initiatives that focus on advanced manufacturing, new vaccines, advanced therapies and innovation involving small businesses.

The investment, which comes out of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund announced by the government earlier this year, is expected to bring in excess of a further £250 million in private funding from industry.

Life sciences is one of five sectors that the government earmarked for investment in its industrial strategy Green Paper, published in January. It is the second of these sectors for which the government has published a detailed plan on support – the first was battery technology.

The plan is detailed in the government's Life Sciences Industrial Strategy, which comes after a review of the sector led by Sir John Bell, Regius professor of medicine at the University of Oxford.

Speaking at the launch of the new strategy at Birmingham's Institute of Translational Medicine, business secretary Greg Clark said that the life sciences sector comprises more than 5,000 companies that employ 235,000 people, with a turnover of £63 billion in 2016. "The government is committed to continuing to help this sector go from strength to strength," he added.

"The Life Sciences Industrial Strategy demonstrates the world-class expertise that the UK already has in this sector and represents the industry's vision for how we can build on our world-leading reputation in this field," he continued.

At the heart of the plan are five themes, the first of which is increasing and sustaining funding for basic research and boosting the country's clinical trials capability.

The other themes include creating a tax environment that attracts manufacturers to invest in creating high-value exports in the UK, speeding up access to innovative healthcare and technologies through the National Health Service, making better use of patient data and investing in skills across the life sciences ecosystem.

The funding will go towards establishing two new advanced manufacturing centres, including a £66 million centre of excellence to develop and manufacture new vaccines and prepare for epidemic threats, known as the Vaccines Development and Manufacturing Centre. The other will be a £13 million Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre, which will help to advance the adoption of new manufacturing technologies, and a further £12 million will be spent to double the capacity of the existing Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult in Stevenage.

The plan also includes £30 million in funding to establish the Advanced Therapies Treatment Centre, which will be based in three locations and will aim to help deliver cell and gene therapies to patients through a network of hospital

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centres. A further £25 million is earmarked to support small and medium-sized businesses working with the manufacturing centres.

The health secretary, Jeremy Hunt, has also announced a £14 million investment in 11 medical technology research centres that will see the NHS and industry work together to develop new medical technologies through the National Institute for Health Research.

Sir John said: "We have created a strategy that capitalises on our strong science base to further build the industry into a globally unique and internationally competitive life sciences ecosystem, supported by collaboration across industry, government, the NHS, academia and research funders to deliver health and wealth."

Sir Robert Lechler, president of the Academy of Medical Sciences, said: "Importantly, the strategy highlights the potential of the NHS, which we are not currently capitalising on. We must use the NHS as an engine for innovation, embedding a culture of research, improving the adoption of new ideas and technologies and ensuring timely access to these."

Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust, said: "The success of this strategy now lies in its vision being backed up by concerted effort and investment across government, the NHS, and the research and private sectors."

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This won't hurt a bit the development of new vaccines is one focus of the new funding

Mission groups

New Russell Group chief hits back at 'noise' of university attacks

The new head of the Russell Group has dismissed recent criticism of UK universities as ill-informed "noise" – claiming that the UK has the "most cost-efficient and impactful university system in the world."

Sir Anton Muscatelli, principal and vice-chancellor of the University of Glasgow, said that he was not overly concerned by the wave of recent criticism, which has seen higher education and its funding system variously described by critics as a "gravy train", "cartel" and a "pointless Ponzi scheme".

In an interview with *Times Higher Education* as he took over as chair of the Russell Group, the 24-strong group of research-intensive universities, Sir Anton said he did not believe that the chorus of criticism – led largely by Lord Adonis, the former education minister – showed that public sentiment was turning against universities.

"I don't think we can conclude that from the recent social media debates," said Sir Anton, who added that he regarded it as "noise", with many of the attacks "not very well-informed".

Such attacks underlined the need for Russell Group universities to spell out more clearly their important societal role as "engines of social mobility and economic growth" to the wider public, said Sir Anton, an economist who has been a consultant to the World Bank and European Commission.

"We talk a lot about the need for improving productivity to address the economic consequences of Brexit, but that cannot be done without the engine of growth, the innovation and the skills base that universities provide," he added.

Russell Group universities had a particularly crucial role to play in driving the UK's economic agenda, he continued, stating that "if you look at the high-skill professionals we need to implement the government's industrial strategy, they will come from Russell Group universities."

While it was important for universities to play a full role in the current debate about "striking the right balance between public and private funding" for higher education, the UK "should be proud that it has the most cost-efficient and impactful university system in the world," Sir Anton said.

"We need to facilitate this debate, rather than bandying about simple and easy headlines, but what we cannot go back to is the system before 1997 when universities were starved of resources," he added.

While Sir Anton is keen to hammer home the economic benefits of Russell Group universities, he is also aware that the "people dimension" of their work is sometimes lost.

"We focus a bit too much on one or two aspects of our impact," he explained, citing the attention given to the potential economic impact of the "fantastic medical research happening at Russell Group universities".

"Rather than focusing on the size and scale of its impact, we perhaps need to focus on the impact that this will have on individual lives," he said.

Sir Anton, a leading voice for the Remain campaign during last year's European Union referendum, will also be stressing the "people dimension" as he lobbies on behalf of higher education during Brexit negotiations, namely for clarification of the status of about 32,000 non-UK European staff working in UK higher education.

"These staff make up 15 per cent of the Russell Group's workforce, but 23 per cent of our academics and 27 per cent of research-only staff – they are hugely valued colleagues who have made the UK their home," he said, adding that it was a "moral duty to safeguard these colleagues during this uncertain period".

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Altmetrics

Tweets about academic papers 'mechanical and devoid of original thought'

Much of the activity about academic journal articles posted on Twitter is "mechanical and devoid of original thought", according to a new study that calls into question the value of some alternative metrics used to evaluate research.

The authors of the study, which

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analysed 8,000 tweets about 4,000 research papers in the field of dentistry, say that "simplistic and naïve" use of social media data risks damaging science. The paper, titled "The unbearable emptiness of tweeting – about journal articles", is published in *PlosOne*.

An altmetrics provider said in response that tweet numbers can add valuable insights, but cannot tell the "whole story" if used in isolation.

In recent years, academics have been encouraged to use social media sites to disseminate their research findings and keep abreast of developments in their field. Counting the number of tweets that a paper garners is just one of a series of alternative metrics that some companies, such as Altmetric, use to offer insights on scholarly literature.

But so far little research has looked at whether tweet counts can act as a measure of engagement with scientific literature. So a group of researchers led by Nicolas Robinson-Garcia, a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Public Policy at the Georgia Institute of Technology, looked at the content of 8,200 tweets from 2,200 US-based Twitter accounts on the subject of 4,350 dental research papers.

They found that the most tweeted paper, about acetaminophen (paracetamol), accumulated 264 tweets, putting it in the top 5 per cent of research outputs scored by Altmetric. The researchers found that almost 75 per cent of the tweets came from the same account, which linked to the paper 65 times in a repeated tweet that said just "paracetamol research" and a further 33 times in another tweet that offered just repetitions of the same wording referring to the safety of acetaminophen in pregnancy.

A second account tweeted the paper 58 times and both accounts ➤

retweeted each other on occasion. If the tweet count ignored all but one of the tweets from these two accounts it would sit at only 15, write the researchers. A similar thing was seen with the second most tweeted paper, they add.

Across the board, Dr Robinson-Garcia and colleagues found "obsessive single issue tweeting, duplicate tweeting from many accounts presumably under centralised professional management, bots, and much presumably human tweeting duplicative, almost entirely mechanical and devoid of original thought".

Less than 10 per cent of the tweets about the papers curated or informed others of the literature. "Finding these accounts or seeing their influence on Twitter data about dental papers would be like looking for a needle in a haystack," the authors say.

"Simplistic and naïve use of social media data risks damaging the scientific enterprise, misleading both authors and consumers of scientific literature," they add.

Catherine Williams, chief marketing officer at Altmetric, said: "We would completely agree that relying on the numbers alone could potentially be damaging, which is why it is so important to look beyond them into the actual mentions to understand the context of who is talking about a piece of research, and why."

"When it comes to evaluating a research output, altmetrics are complementary to other quantitative and qualitative measures and, although they often add valuable insights, of course they alone cannot tell the whole story," she added.

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Internationalisation

German scholarship applications for US study fall by a fifth post-Trump

Applications by German students for scholarships to study in the US have dropped by a fifth since Donald Trump came to power, providing further evidence that his presidency may be making the country's universities less attractive overseas.

No extra visa barriers have been put in place between Germany and the US since the election of Mr Trump, so the issue appears to be about perceptions that the US is now somehow a less appealing place to study.

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Nina Lemmens, director of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in North America, which operates the scholarship programme, said that she had expected a drop in applications, but the fall was nonetheless "pretty significant".

She cautioned that she could "only guess" why fewer had applied during the summer application window, but said that German students "have the feeling that this is not the same welcoming atmosphere that they were expecting".

Application numbers this summer fell from 354 to 285. The scholarships help to pay for a year of study for undergraduate and graduate students.

German students tend to be quite politically aware, Dr Lemmens added. Mr Trump is also particularly unpopular in Germany, where politicians' attitudes towards him have become an election issue. "The sad thing is that the universities [in the US] themselves are totally open

and international like they were before," she said.

There was a similar drop in applications after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, Dr Lemmens continued, after which the US government "made it much more difficult to get a visa. That was something that German students also noticed and they had the feeling it was not so welcoming any more. After 2001, the numbers of applications dropped significantly."

But this time, Dr Lemmens said, there had not been a similar crackdown on students' ability to get a visa. Recently, however, a student on the scheme was the first to have her visa application rejected – a female student with a Syrian and Palestinian background, Dr Lemmens explained.

Regarding the wider drop in applications, "the real question is going to be: is this a one year glitch, or is it going to go on?" she added.

The dip in interest from Germany is evidence that Mr Trump may be making the US a less attractive destination, something previous surveys have hinted at. A survey in February of 250 universities and colleges found that 39 per cent said applications from international students were declining, compared with 35 per cent that said they were increasing. Applications from the Middle East, where some nations have been affected by Mr Trump's visa ban, were particularly badly hit.

A separate survey of more than 100 institutions found an unexpected two percentage point drop in the proportion of international students attending a university after being offered a place as of May. However, a similar trend was observed among US students.

There is also the question of whether Mr Trump is making the US less attractive to academics. On 25-27 August, the German Academic International Network – which aims to tempt German researchers back to Germany – held its annual event in San Francisco at which it discussed "the global political situation, in which populist and anti-science trends are becoming more prevalent".

Dr Lemmens said that the mood among German researchers working in the US was "not very different from the years before". While they were "not exactly happy with the situation" in the US, they were a "little bit detached from the world of politics", partly because they are based in liberal California, and also because their universities are to some extent in a "world of their own".

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Citations

'S-index' aims to tackle abuse of self-citations in science

A new metric measuring how often a scientist cites their own work, sometimes a means of boosting their academic standing, has been proposed by a group of researchers.

The "self-citation index", or s-index, is designed to stop the practice, which the researchers say academics are less likely to do when they know others are watching.

They add in a paper outlining the proposed metric that research funding agencies and universities could use the new system to guide their evaluation of academics.

An academic's citation rate, measuring the number of times their work is referenced, is included in metrics such as the h-index – a widely used hybrid measure of an individual's publication record taking into account both quality and quantity. Citation data have come to play an important part in academic life as they can be used by universities to make hiring decisions and by funding agencies to allocate grants.

In some cases, it may be necessary for a researcher to reference their earlier work. But the process is prone to abuse as researchers stand to gain by inflating their citation rate by citing their own work unnecessarily.

Separate research has found that each time an academic references their own work, they receive three additional citations from others over a five-year period, which can add up over time if academics excessively self-cite. Studies have also found ➤

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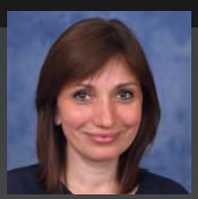

Janet Ilieva
Founder and Director, Education Insight
Janet will discuss the findings of a study which aims to establish whether shifts in the political landscape in major study destinations affect international education demand and engagement.

Dr Helen Turnbull
CEO, Human Facets
Helen will explore the unconscious bias as it relates to our ability to make 'objective' decisions, and the impact these decisions have on diversity and inclusion.

Anjali Rao
Television Journalist
Leading this important debate, "Has international education fuelled nationalist populism by simply serving the interests of global elites?", Anjali will ask whether international education is part of the cause or part of the solution.

Dilruk Jayasinha
Actor, comedian and former international student *Dilruk will close the conference, regaling the audience with his experiences as a former international student in Australia.*

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that men are between 50 and 70 per cent more likely than women to cite their own work, creating an uneven playing field.

To shine a light on the practice, Justin Flatt, a research associate at the Institute of Molecular Life Sciences at the University of Zurich, and colleagues developed the s-index. The metric describes the total number of papers that an academic has published relative to the number of self-citations and the researchers say that it offers a "fair and objective" assessment of the impact and productivity of academics.

Writing in the journal *Publications*, they say: "An s-index will increase the usefulness of the metric upon which it is based, the h-index, by allowing us to look at citation counts from a different, one could say, truer angle."

Dr Flatt and colleagues argue that the s-index could be used alongside the h-index in evaluation decisions to add context about self-citations.

"Researchers will be less likely to blatantly boost their own scores while others are watching," the group add.

Showing the data will encourage authors, reviewers and editors "to give more thoughtful attention to the citation process and thus ultimately this should enhance the informative character of future manuscripts", they say.

"Likewise, funding agencies and academic institutions, in light of the new self-citing data, and especially as outstanding studies become easier to identify, can improve evaluation procedures," they write.

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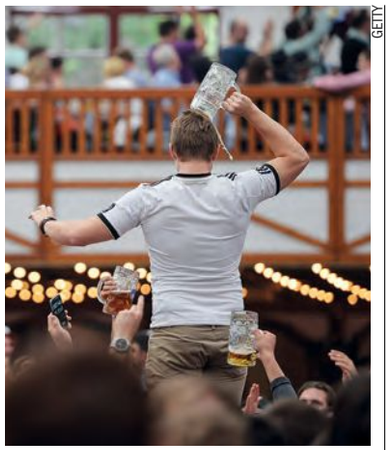
Academic publishing

Germany's strategy for life without Elsevier

German universities have coped "easily" when cut off from Elsevier journals and do not need to rely on pirate article-sharing sites such as Sci-Hub, according to a negotiator from Germany's biggest network of research centres.

Martin Köhler, who has helped to lead negotiations between the Dutch publishing giant and the Helmholtz Association, gave *Times Higher Education* details of Germany's strategy to survive "no deal" with Elsevier – shedding some light on whether other countries could take a similar stance.



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A consortium of all German research organisations is locked in hostile and so far unsuccessful contract negotiations with Elsevier, demanding full open access for German-authored papers and a model in which they pay per article published, not a flat journal subscription fee.

Part of their strategy is to demonstrate that German academics can operate without Elsevier subscriptions, and an increasing number of institutions have said they will not renew their contracts at the end of the year, now including the vast majority of Helmholtz centres, which have a combined revenue of €4.38 billion (£4 billion).

At the beginning of 2017, after negotiations faltered, some German universities went briefly without Elsevier access before the publisher restored it free of charge, giving Germany a dry run of what a national severance might be like.

Dr Köhler said that at two major German universities that were cut off in January, which he declined to identify, there were only "tens" of requests by academics to their libraries for papers they could no longer access, an unexpectedly low number.

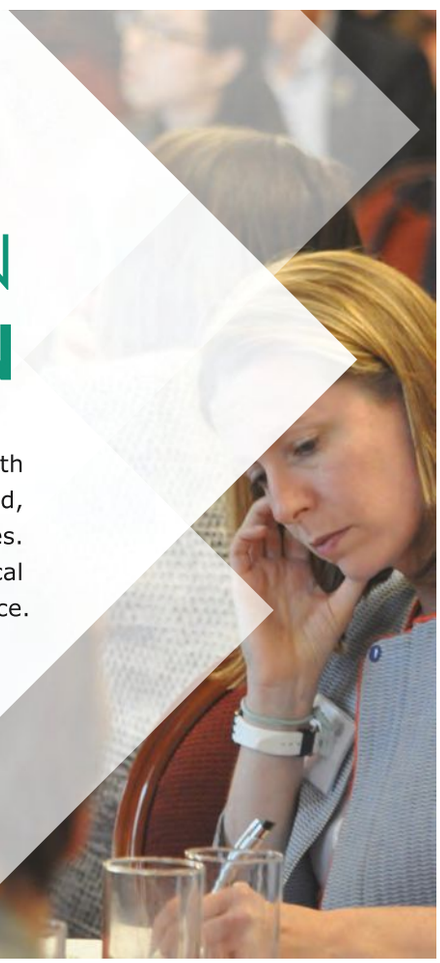
These were "easily handled with an inter-library loan", he explained, Germany's "main strategy" for coping without Elsevier.

In almost every case, other libraries were able to send an article electronically "within a day", he said, and while there is a fee, it is much smaller than paying per article.

The right to loan articles is "deeply engraved" into German law, he explained, and publishers have to allow it unless libraries can pay per article at a reasonable price.

But there are potential problems. "For inter-library loans to work, you still need one partner to access [articles]," Dr Köhler said. At some institutions, existing contracts with Elsevier run for five more years, he added, so the issue is not pressing, but longer term the strategy is untested.

In addition, institutions only lose ➤



access to newly published Elsevier papers when they cut their contracts, he explained. This means an ever-increasing number of papers will be inaccessible as time goes on, although current rules make these papers freely available after 12 months, he added.

German researchers who lost access to Elsevier earlier this year generally got papers from colleagues, Dr Köhler explained. As for the pirate site Sci-Hub, "everybody knows about it, but no one says they are using it", he said. "We will survive without Sci-Hub." Telling academics the cost of ordering papers also makes most of them reconsider whether they are really necessary, he added.

A spokesman for Elsevier said that their data show that, in January this year, researchers at the 52 institutions without access tried to download 124,000 Elsevier articles unsuccessfully. He also focused on the fact that German academics could lose access to ScienceDirect, which allows them to search for and keep up to date with new relevant research. Without it, German academics would work more slowly, he argued, and in the long term this could make German universities less competitive.

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Teaching

Global Teaching Excellence Award winner named

The University of Huddersfield has won the Higher Education Academy's inaugural Global Teaching Excellence Award.

The award, which was launched in partnership with *Times Higher Education* in February, recognises outstanding institution-wide approaches to driving up teaching standards.

Huddersfield's success was announced at an event in London on 4 September, coinciding with the *THE* World Academic Summit taking place at King's College London on 3-5 September.

More than half the 27 finalists on the shortlist were UK institutions – 16 in total – and five hailed from Australia. Universities from Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Hong Kong, South Africa also made the running.

Stephanie Marshall, the HEA's chief executive, said that the number of high-quality submissions from around the world showed that the award had "really captured the imagination of the higher education sector and will help to raise the profile of teaching globally".

While all 27 finalists had made "compelling submissions" that demonstrated strong leadership, teaching and student support, Huddersfield's entry was "unanimously applauded" by the award's international panel of judges, Professor Marshall said.

The university – which was named *THE*'s University of the Year in 2013 – was praised for "the drive and energy with which the executive team is leading teaching" and for its "success in developing students as independent learners", Professor Marshall added.

Huddersfield's win follows a momentous few weeks for the West Yorkshire town, whose newly promoted football team briefly led the Premier League last month after making an impressive start to life in the top flight.


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The university scooped the HEA's highest award ahead of the universities of Bath, Birmingham, Bristol and Exeter, as well as University College London, the University of Adelaide and Canada's McMaster University.

Svava Bjarnason, chair of the award's judging panel and a former member of the World Bank Education Sector Board, said that the judges had been "impressed by the overall quality of the submissions".

Ms Bjarnason, the founding director of the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education thinktank, identified three characteristics that the universities on the shortlist shared: a strong commitment to teaching through mission-relevant strategies; the integration of scholarship of teaching into continuous professional development programmes; and the promotion of industry placements, internships and volunteering for students within the curriculum.

The HEA will publish a detailed report in the autumn to share lessons from all the submissions to this year's award.

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Impact weighting to rise in UK's REF 2021

Hefce stops short of measuring each university's overall impact in research. Holly Else reports

Case studies that document the impact of academic research will count for 25 per cent of a university's score in the next research excellence framework, up from 20 per cent in the previous exercise, the Higher Education Funding Council for England has confirmed.

But the funding body will not bring in a new element that measures the impact of each university as a whole for the next exercise. Instead, it will launch a pilot project on "institutional impact" to see how best to introduce this in the future.

Other changes that the council has made to improve the assessment process include appointing designated individuals on subject assessment panels to ensure that interdisciplinary research is assessed fairly.

Final decisions about how universities can select staff to be submitted for assessment and who can take the credit for the work of people who have moved institution during the REF cycle are still to be made by Hefce.

The REF is a nationwide research assessment exercise that evaluates the quality of academic work coming out of universities. Each institution's score is used to determine how much funding they get from the government's block grant for research, known as quality-related (QR) funding. After the previous exercise, REF 2014, the government commissioned Lord Stern (pictured inset), who was then president of the British Academy, to review the process of university research funding.

He made several recommendations including introducing an assessment of institution-wide impact so that universities could showcase the effectiveness of interdisciplinary research.

But Hefce's initial plans for REF 2021, published today, say that this will not be included in the next exercise. Instead, a pilot project starting early next year will examine how this can be implemented in the future.

An institution's submission to the REF covers three areas: the research output of its academics (which currently accounts for 65 per cent of the overall score), the environment they work in (which contributes 15 per cent) and the impact of their research (which accounts for 20 per cent). Lord Stern recommended that in future exercises the relative contribution for outputs remain at 65 per cent and that impact account for no less than 20 per cent. Hefce has announced that the weighting given to impact

Greater weight the impact of a university's

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academic research will count for 25 per cent of its score in the next REF assessment

will rise to 25 per cent in the next exercise and that research outputs will now count for 60 per cent to take account of that uplift.

Commenting on the change, Jo Johnson, the minister for universities, science, research and innovation, said: "The decision by Hefce and the higher education funding bodies to place greater emphasis on the impact of research reflects our industrial strategy commitment to ensure that the vital work conducted by our world-leading research base progresses from ideas to economic and social benefit.

"Through our record investment of £4.7 billion to 2020-21 for research and development, we are ensuring that the UK remains at the forefront of innovations that will have national and global impact," he added.

Hefce's document, *Initial Decisions on the Research Excellence Framework 2021*, also outlines changes that the organisation hopes will better support interdisciplinary research. The panels of experts that evaluate research in each subject-level unit of assessment will now include at least one person whose job it is to make sure that interdisciplinary research is assessed fairly.

Hefce will add a mechanism to the submissions system that universities can use to flag up interdisciplinary work for assessors. There will also be a new section added to the environment template that institutions can use to describe how they support this type of work.

Other minor changes to the assessment process outlined in the report include rejigging the subjects that are included in each unit of assessment. All engineering research, for example, will now be assessed in a single unit (in REF 2014 there were four), and the 2014 geography, environmental studies and archaeology unit will be split in two.

Hefce is still consulting universities about their views on some of Lord Stern's more controversial recommendations. One is that institutions should submit work for assessment from all their research staff in a bid to stop universities gaming the system by selecting only their best staff for evaluation.

Lord Stern also suggested that in cases where academics move institutions during the REF cycle, the university where the work was conducted should get the credit in assessment. He hoped that this would stop universities poaching top researchers from each other in an attempt to boost their scores.

The consultation on both these issues will close at the end of the month, and Hefce is expected to respond in the autumn.

Hefce's document also gives the proposed timeline for REF 2021. University submissions are due in 2020 and will cover research produced by academics over a seven-year period, from August 2013 to July 2020.

The census date of the exercise, which measures the number of eligible staff at each institution, has yet to be decided.

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Source: Global University Employability Survey 2017 © Emerging. Note: Percentages will not add up to 100 as respondents could pick up to three countries. They could not choose their own country.

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Quality of Chinese and German graduates climbs in recruiters' eyes

Global University Employability Ranking data hold warning for US and UK. Simon Baker writes

Graduate recruiters specialising in engineering now see China as behind only the US and Germany in terms of its graduates' employability, according to a snapshot from a global survey of employers published each year by *Times Higher Education*.

The first data from the annual Global University Employability Ranking, which will be revealed in full by *THE* this autumn, show how Chinese graduates are increasingly being favoured by firms around the world.

Almost 2,500 graduate recruiters from some 20 countries were questioned for the survey, which was designed by the French human resources company Emerging.

Recruiters were asked to name up to three countries that they felt had the most employable graduates, and the US was cited by more than a third of respondents (34 per cent), followed by Germany (24.5 per cent) and the UK (20.7 per cent).

China came in fifth, with 15.1 per cent of respondents choosing the country. However, more than a fifth of recruiters (20.1 per cent) specialising in engineering said that Chinese graduates were among the most employable – third, following only the US and Germany.

Laurent Dupasquier, associate director of Emerging, said that China's performance reflected the "meteoric rise" of the country's universities in the overall employability ranking: Peking University reached 17th position last year, and three other Chinese universities made the global top 60.

He also pointed to evidence from the survey that countries such as China were benefiting from the worldwide trend for more graduates to gain fluency in English.

"As English has become the lingua franca even for non-English speakers, this gradually removes a bias in favour of graduates from native English-speaking countries," he said.

Meanwhile, German graduates' position appears to have remained strong in the eyes of employers as the UK and the US have slipped back slightly compared with last year.

Ulrich Müller, head of policy studies at Germany's Centre for Higher Education, said that the traditional separation in the country between vocational training and higher education had been fading in recent years.

He also noted the "dynamic" development of more private universities of applied sciences offering "innovative courses of study" and pointed out that other universities were rethinking their focus to move away from concentrating solely on research.

"An HEI cannot only be excellent in research, but also in [knowledge] transfer, regional engagement or teaching and learning," he said.

Alison Heron, chair of the UK's Association of Graduate Recruiters, said that some universities in the UK were "rising to the challenge" on employability, given the fees system, competition from overseas institutions and alternatives to university such as apprenticeships.

"UK students are consumers, and they are demanding more from universities. If they see they can get a better 'deal', then they may look elsewhere," she said.

The full graduate employability ranking, including a list of which individual universities are seen as the best by recruiters, is due to be published in November.

This year, the survey will also include a detailed look at the skills that employers are seeking in graduates to help them meet the challenges of the digital age.

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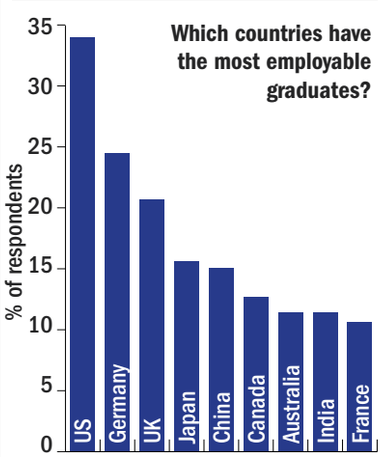
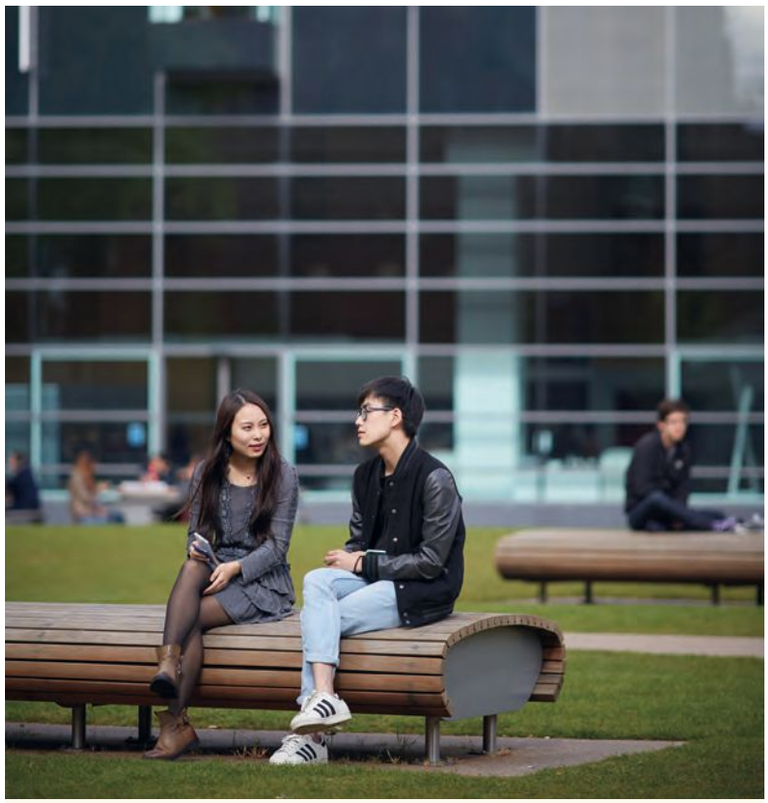


Source: Global University Employability Survey 2017 © Emerging. Note: Percentages will not add up to 100 as respondents could pick up to three countries. They could not choose their own country.

Universities ‘key’ to Manchester’s resurgence

Driving force in regeneration rallies sector to push for Northern Powerhouse. John Morgan reports



PICTURES: ALAMY

Global magnets universities are central to ‘what makes practical, attractive places’

The universities of the North of England will push the government to deliver the Northern Powerhouse strategy, according to former Manchester City Council chief executive turned University of Manchester adviser Sir Howard Bernstein, who stresses higher education’s “fundamental” role in the city’s devolution future.

Sir Howard (pictured inset), who is credited with being a driving force in Manchester’s regeneration and recovery from post-industrial decline, spoke to *Times Higher Education* after taking up a post as honorary professor of politics and part-time adviser on “government interactions, healthcare delivery, devolution, culture and international links” at the University of Manchester earlier this year, following his retirement as council chief executive.

There have been suggestions that Theresa May, the prime minister, has turned away from the Northern Powerhouse strategy, created by George Osborne, the former chancellor whom she ousted from government – which could threaten plans for fast rail links that would connect the North’s cities, universities and researchers.

Sir Howard became chief executive of Manchester City Council in 1998, establishing a powerful pairing with Labour council leader Sir Richard Leese, and from 2011 he was also in effect head of the new Greater Manchester Combined Authority, which has secured England’s most advanced devolution agreement.

Having joined what was then Manchester Corporation straight from school as a junior clerk in 1971, “I think that if anyone would have believed that I would be a professor – that would have been quite fanciful,” said Sir Howard, who was born and brought up in the Manchester suburb of Cheetham Hill.

As council chief executive, Sir Howard looked at “the most successful city-regional economies in the world”, and it was clear to him that “one of the consistent features is a world-class university at the heart”, he said, citing Boston and Melbourne as exemplars. In his council role, he had “a very strong relationship” with University of Manchester president and vice-chancellor Dame Nancy Rothwell and her predecessor, Sir Alan Gilbert.

What role have Manchester’s universities – Manchester Metropolitan University is the other – played in the city’s regeneration?

They have had “a profound influence on our wider international strategy about how Manchester promotes itself internationally, how we develop sectors of global distinction that can attract trade and investment”, Sir Howard said.

More broadly, Manchester had shown that universities were central to “what makes practical, attractive places where people want to live and visit”. He added: “We’re in the throes here [in Manchester] of something very, very special.”

Greater Manchester’s devolution settlement means that it now controls its £6 billion budget for health and social care services. Sir Howard is chair of the Manchester Academic Health Science Centre, a partnership between the University of Manchester and six NHS organisations that conducts research aimed at developing new treatments for patients.

Reducing “the demand for high-dependency services is a fundamental part of our economic strategy” and can be achieved only via devolution of that health and social care budget, Sir Howard said.

Other key areas for development as devolution takes hold are not just in “higher order sectors” such as research – where he singles out advanced materials, life sciences and informatics as the University of Manchester’s distinctive specialisms – but also in skills and getting more people into the labour market. “Intergenerational worklessness” remains “significantly high” in parts of Greater Manchester, Sir Howard said.

“The universities in Manchester are a fundamental part of all of those strands of policy,” he added.

Mr Osborne’s post-politics portfolio career includes an honorary professorship in economics at Manchester. Sir Howard is a long-standing enthusiast for his new colleague’s Northern Powerhouse plan – which includes fast rail links between Manchester and the rest of the North’s major cities.

He said that international examples demonstrate that government investment in transport infrastructure “has synergised labour markets, created more jobs, more investment and allied to a stronger focus on international sectors of growth”.

“We can do that in this country,” Sir Howard said. “What we need is the commitment of national governments to actually deliver: the Northern Powerhouse rail strategy, in particular.” Connecting cities will “ensure that the North of England is able to play its fullest part in the new changing global market, which is going to become even more difficult to negotiate after Brexit”, Sir Howard added.

In its devolution settlement and many other fields, Manchester looks streets ahead of England’s other regional cities. Why?

“I can assure you that a lot of people work very hard not just to drive the vision, but even harder to work across political lines, across sectors, in collaborative ways to deliver that vision,” Sir Howard said.

What does he think makes the city special? “It’s a place that has a very clear identity, a place that has a very clear sense of purpose,” he replied.

Manchester’s identity is “a bit edgy – I wouldn’t say that it’s arrogant but there is a self-confidence about it,” he added. “And also endeavour – we work hard here.”

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Peru

UK collaborations backed by bilateral innovation fund

Peru and the UK have joined forces to promote the development of science and technology in innovation. The recently launched Newton-Paulet fund – named after Isaac Newton and the renowned Peruvian scientist and inventor Pedro Paulet – is worth $26 million (£20 million), with equal shares provided by the UK and Peru's National Council of Science, Technology and Technological Innovation. The goal is to enable Peruvian and UK scientists and researchers to work together over the next four years to address crucial development challenges for Peru in three core areas: health (malnutrition and anaemia); clean water, including the impact of retreating glaciers; and biodiversity issues relating to Peru's unique geography.

United States

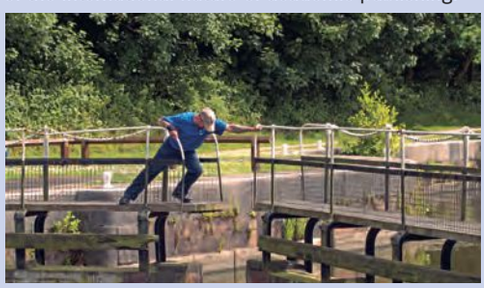
Scholars wade into culture war

An opinion piece by two law professors asserting that "all cultures are not equal" outraged many at their institutions. The article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, written by a scholar from the University of Pennsylvania and one from the University of San Diego, blamed many perceived modern ills on "an anti-authoritarian, adolescent, wish-fulfillment ideal" that arose in the late 1960s. The authors lamented "the single-parent, antisocial habits, prevalent among some working-class whites; the anti-'acting white' rap culture of inner-city blacks; and the anti-assimilation ideas gaining ground among some Hispanic immigrants". A column in Penn's student newspaper, *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, which was signed by 54 students and alumni, said that the article was "steeped in anti-blackness", while Penn's law school dean said that any assertion "that one culture is superior to all others is contrary to our core values as an institution", Inside Higher Ed reported.

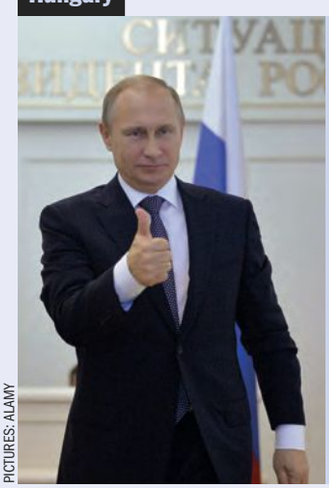
Norway

Researchers must take the open path

Journal articles that result from publicly funded research in Norway must be open access within seven years, according to new guidelines. The government said that it expects researchers to "play a vital role" in converting important pay-walled journals into open-access ones. Only in exceptional circumstances would publicly funded research be published in journals that do not allow academics to deposit a copy in a repository, it added. The government says that Norway's national goals on open access must align with those of other countries and the European Union because of the international nature of academic publishing.



Hungary



PICTURES: ALAMY

University to confer honorary citizenship on Putin

A Hungarian university is to offer Vladimir Putin honorary citizenship, the highest award it can bestow, according to local reports. The University of Debrecen will play a leading role in a new Russian-funded nuclear power plant, training engineers and conducting research projects, and as a mark of gratitude it has decided to honour the Russian president, according to the Hungarian Free Press website. There is concern in Hungary that the government – accused by critics of being too close to Russia at the expense of relations with Brussels – is bringing universities under its control by creating new state-appointed chancellor positions to oversee institutional finances.

China

Ideology checks for lecturers

Several of China's top universities are establishing units to monitor the politics of their lecturers after the institutions were criticised for failing to promote Communist Party ideology. Seven leading Chinese institutions have set up "teachers' affairs departments" under their Communist Party committees after being ordered to improve "ideological and political work" among teaching staff, the *South China Morning Post* reported. The moves follow the publication in late August of "rectification reports" on eight top-tier universities, including Peking and Tsinghua universities, which were produced by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection after it visited 29 universities across mainland China earlier this year.

World policy

The UK needs a Ucas for postgraduates

UK universities are preparing for the arrival of the latest batch of students. But in the case of postgraduates, this is a tricky business because most universities can only "guesstimate" who will turn up. This further complicates the already difficult challenges of timetabling, resourcing adequate support and budget planning.

In my 26-year career, I have been responsible for different elements of the admissions and entry process. It has always perplexed and dismayed me that university leaders do not see the benefits that a national postgraduate admissions service could offer. Such a scheme has existed since 2007, when Ucas, the undergraduate admissions service, launched the UK Postgraduate Application and Statistical Service. But while every UK university uses Ucas, just 11 use UKPASS.

Research from the Postgraduate Experience Project, which I created and led in 2014-15, leads me to believe that participation in a national postgraduate admissions system should be compulsory.

Vice-chancellors' unwillingness to act is symptomatic of the fact that the sector has tended to treat postgraduate study as a bolt-on to the core business of educating undergraduates. But such a system would benefit individuals, institutions and the sector more broadly.

First, it would help institutions get a better idea of who may walk through the door in September. As it stands, postgraduates can apply to as many universities and for as many different courses as they like. Each institution must process a candidate's application not knowing if they have applied to other institutions or for other courses.

Applicants using UKPASS can apply for up to 10 courses at any participating institution. But with so few institutions taking part, the potential benefits of the system, such as the ability to predict enrolments based on a range of characteristics provided in the application, are not fully realised.

Second, a structured admission process with a reasonable application fee would focus applicants' attention on what they want to study and why. It would reduce applications from those not genuinely interested in postgraduate study. The Postgraduate Experience Project found that some international applicants never intend to study in the UK; they want to put the UK offer on their CVs to help them obtain a university place in their own countries. For just one faculty of my university at the time, I calculated that the cost of processing fruitless applications was almost £60,000, factoring in administrative and academic time.

Third, collecting statistics on applicants in a consistent way would enable the sector to better understand participation behaviour and barriers. A national admissions system would allow us, for instance, to identify whether socially disadvantaged students are progressing to postgraduate level, as well as how they fare after arriving. Since 2011, the decline in postgraduate study has been generally continuous, but if the sector had better access to patterns of enrolment, it could be more creative in responding to the problem, perhaps by offering short courses or blending part-time face-to-face learning with online.

Students and staff are rightly frustrated when they do not have a functional timetable three weeks into the start of term. It sets a bad tone and belies the promise of a high-quality experience. If, as has been suggested, the teaching excellence framework (which draws on the National Student Survey) is extended to postgraduate study, such failures could come to haunt universities.

For the UK to sustain its position as a world-leading provider of postgraduate education, more creativity and innovation is needed. But this requires accurate, national data as well as collaboration between universities. A compulsory UK-wide postgraduate admissions scheme would provide this, and its benefits would far outweigh the costs.

Michelle Morgan is associate dean for student experience at Bournemouth University's Faculty of Media and Communication.

Analysis

Brexit poses threat to London's pull on international stage

Analysis of *THE* World University Rankings data shows rival urban HE hubs are poised to move up if UK mishandles EU exit. Simon Baker writes

Boston, London, Paris, Hong Kong, Melbourne: these are just a few cities that might spring to mind when thinking of the world's most prominent destinations for higher education. Indeed, they all featured in a *Times Higher Education* analysis of cities with the biggest concentration of top-ranked institutions published earlier this year.

But which of these urban university clusters perform best in terms of research, teaching, links with industry and, perhaps the key advantage they possess as global cities, attracting students and staff?

A new *THE* analysis drawing on fresh data from the World University Rankings 2018 shows that London heads the field both in terms of the number of highly ranked universities and its performance as an international higher education hub.

However, the results also reveal that London trails cities in the US, Asia and other parts of Europe on just about every other measure of university performance. Perhaps most worryingly for institutions in the UK's capital, given the threat that Brexit could hamper London's ability to attract staff and students, other cities are also catching up fast on internationalisation.

The analysis looked at 16 metropolitan areas that had at least five institutions in the top 500 of the World University Rankings. Along with the well-known global cities mentioned above, the list also includes clusters of highly ranked universities spread across two or more cities within close proximity, such as Washington DC and Baltimore in the US, or Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht in the Netherlands (labelled Holland-Utrecht after the provinces in which the cities are located).

Comparing these urban clusters of universities on the five "pillars" that make up the 2018 rankings shows that UK city clusters, and not just London, lead the world on international outlook, a measure of global research collaboration and the ability to attract students and staff from abroad. However, close behind are Hong Kong and the Australian cities of Sydney and Melbourne, while other European urban areas also perform strongly.

For US city clusters, like institutions generally in the country, international outlook is their weakest suit. However, they perform much more strongly on how often their research is cited, a measure of quality that carries a high weighting in the final overall ranking score. On this, Boston is the leading city, with an average citation impact score of 92.4 out of 100, while New York-New Jersey and Washington-Baltimore also do well.

Outside the US, it is not London but other European city clusters that are rivalling the US on citations. Holland-Utrecht comes second, behind only Boston, while city clusters in Sweden, Denmark and Belgium also post high scores.

London is way down the list for the teaching, research and industry income pillars of the rankings. On teaching, US cities again lead, followed by cities in East Asia. On research, continental European cities dominate. For industry links, however, it is Seoul that is top.

A close look at the metrics informing the international outlook pillar suggests that cities that have traditionally fared less well in attracting students and staff from overseas – and on cross-border research work – are making fast progress (see graph below left).

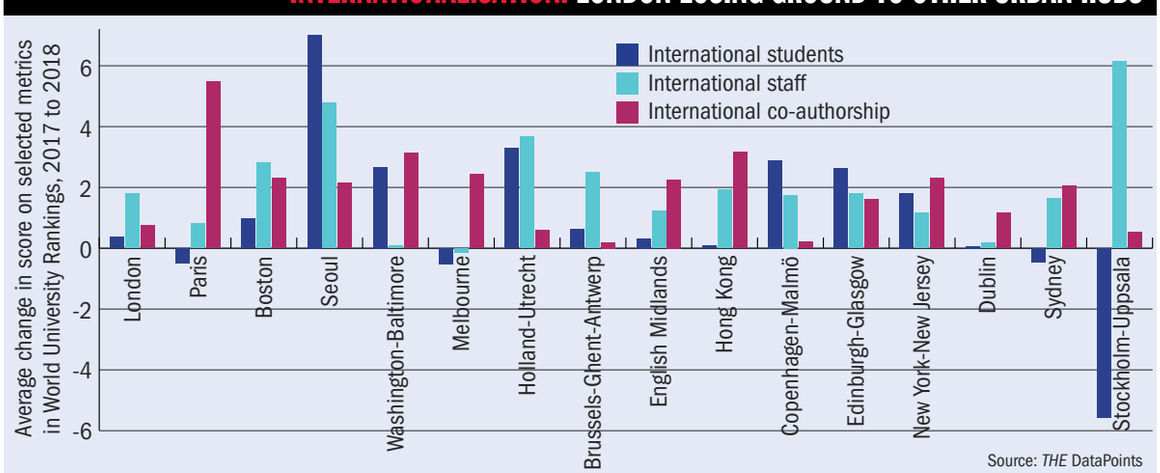
On average, universities in the Seoul cluster boosted their scores on shares of international students by seven points compared with last year's rankings, while on international staff the city's institutions recorded an average rise of almost five points. Urban clusters in the US also saw relatively strong improvement in their international metric scores, although like Seoul they are starting from a lower position than places in the UK and continental Europe.

Perhaps most worrying for London – whose performance on the internationalisation measure was relatively static compared with last year – is that other city clusters in Europe that already score highly on other rankings pillars are now improving on global outlook.

The Holland-Utrecht area, which includes five institutions in the top 100 of the World University Rankings, saw its average scores for international staff and students both rise significantly.

Karl Dittrich, president of the VSNU association of Dutch research universities, said that the country's institutions had been pursuing a strategy of internationalising both the student body and the academic workforce, and that this was now

INTERNATIONALISATION: LONDON LOSING GROUND TO OTHER URBAN HUBS



Source: *THE* DataPoints

GETTY

paying dividends.

On staff, he said: "We all know that we are in a global competition for talent, and the Dutch universities try to be as attractive an employer as possible." There are tax benefits on offer in the Netherlands for "international talent", he pointed out. "We do hope that, in cooperation with the government, we will be able to continue to be an attractive employer for research talent worldwide."

Such moves are sure to raise fears in London that rival universities are waiting in the wings should Brexit be a disaster for higher education.

Michael Arthur, president and provost of University College London, said *THE*'s analysis demonstrated that "London's universities are in a position of real strength to withstand the challenges of Brexit, but on condition that the right things are done".

He added that although European Union academics were mainly staying put for now, they were "worried and uncertain about the future", and he warned that "many have been approached to move elsewhere".

"We can't be complacent – as demonstrated by the fact that other world cities are gaining on us fast."

However, others pointed out that London possessed many advantages as a global higher education destination that would not evaporate overnight, such as the use of English and centres for research collaboration like the Francis Crick Institute.

William Locke, director of the Centre for Higher Education Studies at the UCL Institute of Education, said that London could be well placed to benefit if there was an "officially sanctioned boom" in overseas student recruitment after the recent official review of UK immigration statistics, especially since students from the rest of EU might pay higher tuition fees in future.

Meanwhile, Philip Altbach, research professor and founding director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, said that although cities in Asia were attracting more academics and students, they faced an uphill task given the cultural draw of places such as London, Paris or Boston.

URBAN ATTRACTIONS

Top urban areas for number of universities in top 500 of *Times Higher Education*'s World University Rankings 2018

London	14
Paris	10
Boston	8
Melbourne	7
Seoul	7
Washington-Baltimore	7
English Midlands	6
Hong Kong	6
Holland-Utrecht	6
Brussels-Ghent-Antwerp	6

"These cities…are attractive to students as places to study because of their cosmopolitan nature, the languages spoken and other cultural reasons. The challenge for cities like Seoul is to be put on the map in the same way," he said, although he pointed out that Hong Kong might be well placed to compete given its position as a global melting pot where English is widely spoken.

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Obituary

Donald McNeill, 1936-2017

A leading proponent of Catholic social teaching within higher education has died.

Donald McNeill was born in Chicago on 14 April 1936, the son and namesake of a prominent radio personality whose *Breakfast Club* variety show was the longest-running programme in the history of network radio. The younger McNeill pursued a rather different path: after completing a degree at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana (1958), he studied theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and was ordained a priest in the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1965. The following year he joined the Notre Dame faculty, where he spent the rest of his working career, although he later gained a PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary (1971).

On his return to Notre Dame from Rome, Father McNeill once told an interviewer that he had had doubts about whether he could be "a teacher in the classical sense". He always remained deeply grateful for the support in strengthening his vocation and deepening his study of theology that he was given by other Notre Dame priests, notably Theodore M. Hesburgh, the 15th president of the university, and Henri Nouwen, visiting lecturer in psychology from 1966 to 1968.

As a result of these influences, Father McNeill began to collaborate with John Joseph Egan, an activist Chicago priest who assisted Father Hesburgh from 1970 to 1983, on a number of theology courses and community-based research projects designed to express their commitment to the social teaching of the Catholic Church. He also set out his philosophy in a book titled *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life* (1981), co-authored with Father Nouwen and Douglas A. Morrison.

A committed and very popular teacher, Father McNeill received a faculty award in 1980 when he was commended for "mov[ing] in and out of the lives of students and faculty, probing, seeking and challenging – reminding us all that education can never be contained totally in the lecture hall, the library or the laboratory". In 1983, he realised his dream of setting up Notre Dame's Center for Social Concerns, devoted to learning, research and service informed by Catholic social teaching, where he served as executive director until 2002. More than 2,500 students a year now take programmes there.

"Father Don McNeill engaged, encouraged and empowered laypeople, especially students, to make the world a better, more just place for all," said Notre Dame's current president, Reverend John Jenkins. "Under his direction, countless Notre Dame alumni have become faithful and generous contributors to the common good."

Father McNeill died on 24 August.

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MATT CASHORE

HE&me

Andrew Chadwick, an authority on digital media, power and democracy, is newly appointed professor of political communication in the Centre for Research in Communication at Loughborough University. The author of *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power* and *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*, he is the first professor to be appointed via Loughborough's Excellence 100 campaign, an initiative launched earlier this year to recruit up to 100 outstanding academics across a wide range of disciplines

● When and where were you born?
In 1970 in Middlesbrough, an industrial (now mostly post-industrial) town in the North East of England. My parents were young when I was born, so there wasn't a big generation gap. My dad was a plumber – he only recently retired. My mum worked in a clothes factory before giving up work to look after my brother and me.

● How has this shaped you?
My dad in particular taught me the value of self-reliance, hard work and perseverance. By constantly describing how things worked he also instilled in me what I would later discover the famous sociologist C. Wright Mills called the "sociological imagination": the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms that generate everyday social norms and institutions. I did reasonably well at secondary school but my eyes were truly opened by some wonderful teachers at sixth-form college. My working-class and northern background had a huge influence on me. Until I was 17 I hadn't really thought about going to university and expected to get a job in the town, perhaps working as a clerk in local government. When I first arrived at Birmingham in 1989 I was shocked that there were so few working-class kids. I was the first in my family's history to go to university and was lucky enough to eventually win funding from the Economic and Social Research Council to do a master's and a PhD at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

● What inspired you to enter the field of political communication?
Looking back, there were two important moments. When I was an undergraduate I studied political science and loved it but each year I was permitted to take courses from the department of cultural studies – the successor to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies that hosted Stuart Hall in the 1970s. This ignited a passion for understanding media. The second inspiration was living through the internet's rapid diffusion during the late 1990s. I was suddenly gripped by what was going on – the dotcom boom and bust, the development of online culture, the early experiments in online democratic engagement. I started researching the internet's emerging role in politics.

● You have developed the concept of the "hybrid media system" and argue that political communication has entered a new era. Can you tell us more about this theory?
Political communication is journeying through a chaotic transition period induced by the rise of digital media. Understanding the systemic consequences of this transition requires a new agenda for both political communication research and the broader study of media and communication technologies. The hybrid media system is built upon interactions among older and newer media logics in the reflexively connected social fields of media and politics. Actors create, tap or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals and in ways that modify, enable or disable the agency of others, across and between a range of older and newer media settings. My book examines this systemic hybridity in flow – in information consumption and production patterns, in newsmaking, in parties and election campaigns, in activism and in government communication.

● What is your assessment of the way that information spread and influenced politicians, the media and the public in the recent elections in the UK and the US?
There is an "analytics turn" in election campaigning: the

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

increased use by campaign elites of experimental data science methods to interrogate large-scale aggregations of behavioural information, with the aim of organising and mobilising key segments of the electorate. At the same time, as Corbyn's Labour has shown, citizens are breathing new life into parties and campaigns from the bottom up and remaking them in their own participatory image using digital media. Elections will continue to be shaped by this tension between control and interactive engagement.

● In Europe and the US, the populist Right has used emotional appeals to win support. What could progressive politicians do to combat this?

The Enlightenment rationalist yearning for a "pure" public sphere free from prejudice and ignorance has come up against the reality that media are, for many, a means to affirm identity. Progressive politicians need to stand up to hatred and discrimination and promote tolerance and respect for difference, but also work to promote a social solidarity and communality of the left, through narratives that resonate with people's lived experiences.

> "As Corbyn's Labour has shown, citizens are breathing new life into parties and campaigns and remaking them in their own participatory image using digital media"

● If you were the universities minister for a day, what policy would you immediately introduce to the sector?

The abolition of undergraduate tuition fees and student loans and the reintroduction of proper maintenance grants. The current regime says to large numbers of talented working-class youngsters: "This is not for you." And this gets in the bloodstream early on, long before A levels.

● What one thing would improve your working week?

An immediate 50 per cent reduction in the publication of interesting research in my field. Writing on digital media, politics and society has exploded in the past decade. It's hugely exciting but it's often difficult to keep up with all the terrific work. I'm the editor of a book series, Oxford University Press' *Studies in Digital Politics*, which helps me gain perspective, but information overload is very real for scholars in my field. We grumble about it all the time.

Ellie Bothwell

Appointments

Scott Dodelson, a physicist who has studied the composition of the universe's dark matter, has been appointed head of the department of physics at Carnegie Mellon University, whose McWilliams Center for Cosmology has a key role in a number of large, international cosmological surveys. "I was drawn by the university's enthusiasm for foundational research," said Professor Dodelson, who arrives at Carnegie Mellon having been co-founder and interim director of the Center for Particle Astrophysics at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, and before that a professor in the department of astronomy and astrophysics and the Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics at the University of Chicago.

KU Leuven rector **Luc Sels** has taken office, along with his team of new vice-rectors who form the bulk of the executive board, responsible for the day-to-day management of the university. Professor Sels, dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics since 2009, narrowly beat former rector Rik Torfs in a vote among staff and students.

Simon Gilson, chair of the Faculty of Arts and professor of Italian at the University of Warwick, has been appointed to the Agnelli-Serena professorship of Italian studies at the University of Oxford. He will take up the role in January 2018. Professor Gilson joined Warwick in 1999 and served as head of Italian, later heading the first Sub-Faculty of Modern Languages.

Michael Solomon, professor of chemical engineering and professor of macromolecular science and engineering at the University of Michigan, has been appointed interim dean and interim vice-provost for academic affairs (graduate studies) of the university's Rackham Graduate School. He replaces Carol Fierke, appointed as executive vice-president of Texas A&M University.

Jim Cawley, the former lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, has been appointed vice-president of institutional advancement at Philadelphia's Temple University.

SHORTLIST 2017

Business School of the Year
Sponsored by Amity University

- **Bristol Business School,** *University of the West of England*
- **ESCP Europe, London campus**
- **Fashion Business School, London College of Fashion,** *University of the Arts London*
- **The Open University Business School**
- **Pearson Business School,** *Pearson College London*
- **Saïd Business School,** *University of Oxford*

International Impact Award

- **University of Bedfordshire**
- **Leeds Arts University**
- **University of Leicester, in collaboration with the University of Kufa (Iraq)**
- **Loughborough University**
- **The Open University**
- **University of Worcester**

Research Project of the Year: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Sponsored by Elsevier

- **Durham University**
- **University of Exeter**
- **Heriot-Watt University**
- **University of London**
- **Royal Central School of Speech and Drama**
- **Southampton Solent University**

Research Project of the Year: STEM

- **University of Exeter**
- **Heriot-Watt University**
- **Liverpool John Moores University**
- **London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London**
- **Newcastle University**
- **Queen Mary University of London**

Outstanding Research Supervisor of the Year
Sponsored by UK Council for Graduate Education

- **Gerardo Adesso,** *University of Nottingham*
- **Jon Anderson,** *Cardiff University*
- **Francesca Arrigoni,** *Kingston University*
- **Yogesh K. Dwivedi,** *Swansea University*
- **Jelena Grbic,** *University of Southampton*
- **Matthew Inglis,** *Loughborough University*

Outstanding Support for Students

- **De Montfort University**
- **Durham University**
- **University of Essex**
- **University of Glasgow**
- **University of Kent**
- **Sheffield Hallam University**

Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development

Sponsored by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

- University of Bradford
- De Montfort University
- Edge Hill University
- University of Exeter
- University of Glasgow
- Ulster University

Outstanding University Entrepreneurship Award

Sponsored by NCEE

- City, University of London
- Falmouth University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Pearson College London
- University of Salford
- Southampton Solent University

International Collaboration of the Year

- Cardiff University, in collaboration with the University of Namibia
- University of Chester
- London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London, in collaboration with the Institut Français de la Mode (France)
- University of Nottingham, in collaboration with Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (China)
- University of Oxford
- University of Salford, in collaboration with the Zhejiang Fashion Institute of Technology (China)

Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year

- Cardiff Metropolitan University
- University of Cumbria and HMP Haverigg
- King's College London
- Kingston University
- Ulster University
- University of Warwick

Most Innovative Contribution to Business-University Collaboration

Sponsored by the National Centre for Universities and Business

- Hastings Hotels, in collaboration with Ulster University
- NHS Wales Informatics Service, in collaboration with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David
- Nestlé, in collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University
- Paxman, in collaboration with the University of Huddersfield
- Rolls-Royce, in collaboration with the universities of Cambridge, Birmingham and Swansea
- Ryder Architecture, in collaboration with Northumbria University

Most Innovative Teacher of the Year

Sponsored by the Higher Education Academy

- Georgina Blakeley, *The Open University*
- Scott Border, *University of Southampton*
- Nicci Campbell, *University of Southampton*
- Russell Crawford, *Keele University*
- Sharon Edwards, *Bucks New University*
- Duncan Reavey, *University of Chichester*

Excellence and Innovation in the Arts

- University of Bedfordshire
- University of Brighton
- University of Exeter
- Loughborough University
- Teesside University
- University of Worcester

SHORTLIST 2017

Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community

- Cardiff University
- Durham University
- University of Glasgow, in collaboration with Glasgow Science Festival
- Queen Mary University of London
- Sheffield Hallam University
- Ulster University

THE DataPoints Merit Award

THE DataPoints

For this *THE* DataPoints Merit Award, we used our latest World University Rankings data to identify institutions that are excelling on a "bang for the buck" measure of research performance.

- University of Exeter
- King's College London
- Lancaster University
- University of Leicester
- Queen Mary University of London
- University of Sussex

Technological Innovation of the Year

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- University of Birmingham
- GW4 Alliance (the universities of Bristol, Bath, Cardiff and Exeter)
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- University of Manchester
- University of St Andrews
- University of Sunderland

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- University of Hertfordshire
- Staffordshire University
- University of Sunderland

The Lord Dearing Lifetime Achievement Award

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There is no shortlist for this category. The winner, chosen by *Times Higher Education*, will be announced at the awards ceremony.

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Appointment of

Director of the Institute for Innovation and Enhancement in Learning and Teaching

Keele UNIVERSITY

Keele University is renowned for its exciting approach to higher education, excellence in research and education, outstanding student experience, beautiful campus and strong community spirit. It has a turnover of some £150 million, 10,000 students and a total staff of approximately 2,000.

Keele has grown very significantly in the last two years and invested heavily in its campus and infrastructure. Keele has been the top ranking University for student satisfaction in the NSS for the three years 2014, 2015 and 2016 and has secured Gold rating in the TEF in 2017. The University now seeks to appoint a Director for its new Institute for Innovation and Enhancement in Learning and Teaching.

The successful candidate will serve as strategic and management lead for the delivery of outstanding learning and teaching support, identifying and implementing new educational developments and innovations. He/she will be charged with developing technology enhanced learning provision, creating meaningful learner analytics, and promoting excellent teaching delivery. The successful candidate will draw upon the resources of the Academic Developers and Learning Technologists who already exist across the University. The appointee will report to the new PVC (Education) and will ultimately lead a team of around 30 individuals. The institute will comprise most of Keele's Learning and Professional Development Centre, and Student Learning, Learning Technology, and Careers and Employability teams.

Candidates may have an academic or professional services background. Ambitious, creative, energetic and determined, the successful candidate will demonstrate strategic vision and well-honed leadership skills, with a proven ability to work collaboratively across the institution. A proven track record of leading change in an academic environment is critical.

Keele is investing significantly in this area of strategic importance. This role represents an opportunity to build on the University's outstanding track record of achievement in Learning and Teaching.

Keele University values diversity, and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, and to proper and fair representation across its senior decision making groups. In support of these commitments, the University particularly welcomes expressions of interest and applications from women and from individuals of black and ethnic minority backgrounds, for this post.

For further details on the role, please visit **www.minervasearch.com/keele**.
To apply, please send a cover letter and CV to **keele@minervasearch.com** by close of business on 29 September.

Race Equality Charter Member

Athena SWAN

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Royal Holloway, University of London is ranked in the top 30 of all UK universities. Through world-class research that expands minds and changes lives, the dedication of our academics and the Royal Holloway student experience, ours is a community that inspires individuals to succeed academically, socially and personally.

Our strategic plan builds on our strengths by ensuring the highest academic standards, an excellent student experience and responsible governance, leaving a strong legacy for future generations. Essential to delivering this is the support and drive of a range of high quality professional services. We now have the opportunity to redefine the professional services offer through the appointment of a range of new Directors including the newly created role of Chief Information Officer and the Director of Student Recruitment.

The College is embarking upon a period of growth and transformation based on new digital and core IT improvements. Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer, our new Chief Information Officer will provide the leadership to this multi-million pound programme.

Our strategic plan is clear in our goal to sustainably grow our student numbers while protecting all that is special about the Royal Holloway experience. Working directly to the Director of Marketing and Communications, our Director of Student Recruitment is a mainstay position with the College providing leadership and direction to Student Recruitment, Admissions and Applicant Services.

Members of the senior management team, both positions require leaders with relevant experience who can build relationships at all levels within the College and meet the expectations of a diverse range of stakeholders. For full information please visit **www.andersonquigley.com/royalholloway.** For a confidential discussion please contact our advisors Ed Pritchard **(07980 817 927)** or Elliott Rae **(07584 078 534)** at Anderson Quigley.

Closing date for applications is
midday 9th October 2017

Royal Holloway, University of London is an equal opportunities employer and positively welcomes applications from all sections of the community, particularly people from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with disabilities.

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Queen Mary University of London

Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry

Appointment of Dean for Dentistry and Director, Institute of Dentistry

Ranked first in the Complete University Guide, and as the leading dental school for research in the UK as assessed in the 2014 REF, the Institute of Dentistry at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry is at the forefront of scholarship and teaching in the UK.

Queen Mary University of London and Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD) are now seeking the next Dean for Dentistry and Director, Institute of Dentistry who can sustain the Institute's unparalleled reputation for teaching and research excellence, in line with the University's core strategic objectives. Reporting to the Vice-Principal (Health), and working in close partnership with Barts Health Trust and institute directors within the SMD, this role will be essential in leading the delivery of the highest quality of dental training to our undergraduate and postgraduate students informed by world-class research and innovation.

Following significant investment in resources and infrastructure, including the launch of the new £78 million Dental School at Whitechapel, students and researchers now have access to the some of the most technologically advanced dental facilities in the country.

As one of six Institutes in SMD, the Institute employs more than 170 staff (circa 77 FTE), and currently offers two undergraduate and twelve postgraduate taught programmes, with a combined cohort of over 500 students.

We are now recruiting for a highly motivated senior leader, with an infectious passion for outstanding dental research and teaching, who can architect the next phase of the Institute's strategy, fostering a research and teaching agenda that is confluent with the emerging needs of the local community for whom we provide specialist care. For this reason, we are seeking applicants who hold a relevant doctoral degree, have a demonstrable track record in research and scholarship, and who possess a strong understanding of NHS partnerships.

Informal questions regarding the post can be directed to the University's appointed advisors, Perrett Laver: https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies or on +44 207 340 6200 quoting reference number 3194.

The deadline for applications for this position is 12 noon (BST) on Wednesday 20th September 2017.

Perrett Laver

AMERICAS ASIA PACIFIC EMEA

To pen it is not to own it

Writing is part of academics' jobs; why should they claim rights over their public-funded content, asks Gabriel Egan

In an innovative piece of recent research, Leibniz University of Hanover scholar Hartmut Ilsemann ran Shakespeare's plays through a computer program. He found that when the Globe Theatre opened in 1599, the median length of speeches dropped from about 10 words to about five.

Shakespeare is not around to complain about his works being data-mined like this, but what if I ran such tests on the writing of living historians? Would that be a proper use of their writing? Not according to the renowned digital humanist Marilyn Deegan. For her, data-mining is no way to treat monographs that are "creative works in their own right". Their "carefully crafted arguments", she argues, should not be subject to "atomisation and appropriation by others" ("Open access monograph dash could lead us off a cliff", Opinion, 27 July).

It is hard not to conclude that, in essence, Deegan is objecting not so much to open access principles as to the condition of writing itself. There is simply no way for authors to control what happens once their works are launched into the wider world of readers. The author cannot be present everywhere to police how a text is consumed. Jonathan Swift (who is dead) cannot prevent undergraduates taking *A Modest Proposal* literally, any more than Rob Reiner (who is alive) can prevent audiences taking *This is Spinal Tap* for a documentary. Those are the hazards of creativity.

> **For advocates of open access, the overriding principle is that public servants whose contracts give them time to write are, by virtue of being paid to do it, no longer the owners of that writing**

For advocates of open access, the overriding principle is that public servants whose contracts give them time to write are, by virtue of being paid to do it, no longer the owners of that writing. No tax inspector or police officer can claim ownership of what they write for their jobs, so why should academics?

Certainly, academics have considerable freedom to choose their own topics, and their writing is more "authored" than that of other public servants, which is typically anonymous. Even here, though, practice varies. Beeching, Dearing, Chilcot and Stern are certainly treated as the authors of their landmark reports for the UK government on, respectively, the railways, higher education, the Iraq War and climate change. Yet no one would argue that these reports were their authors' personal property, to do with as they saw fit.

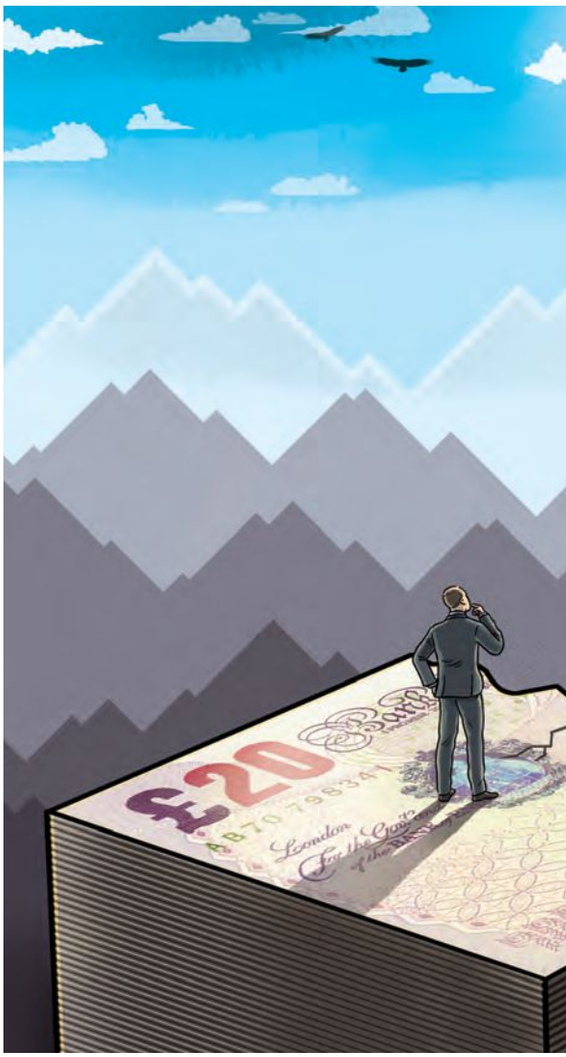
If university academics feel this way, they need to make that case explicitly. They must explain why it is not unjust that, collectively, our universities pay their employees to write books and then have to buy the same books back from publishers in order to stock their libraries. Academics may well feel that they have to play this game for the sake of career advancement, but that is no reason to defend the status quo in academic publishing.

Faced with these arguments, the opponents of open access usually fall back on one last defence: that academics write their books in their own time, not their university's. This certainly happens: ours is a profession in which much unpaid overtime is done in the evenings and at weekends. But, really, that is a separate fight. If we call this "overtime", as the UK's University and College Union does, we are acknowledging that book writing is part of our contracted work, not a leisure activity. Only academics who have no research hours at all specified in their contracts can truthfully claim that their books are made entirely in their own time and hence are their own private property. Everyone else should acknowledge that the public pays for our works and should therefore not have to pay again to read them.

Aside from all else, there is an unassailable argument in favour of open access monographs from a global rights perspective. More research will get done more efficiently when all the raw materials for doing it are available for free on the internet, which (unlike research libraries) can now be accessed by more than half the world's population.

Who knows how many potential Deegans and Egans never got a chance to change people's minds because they were born in the wrong part of the world?

Gabriel Egan is professor of Shakespeare studies and director of the Centre for Textual Studies at De Montfort University.

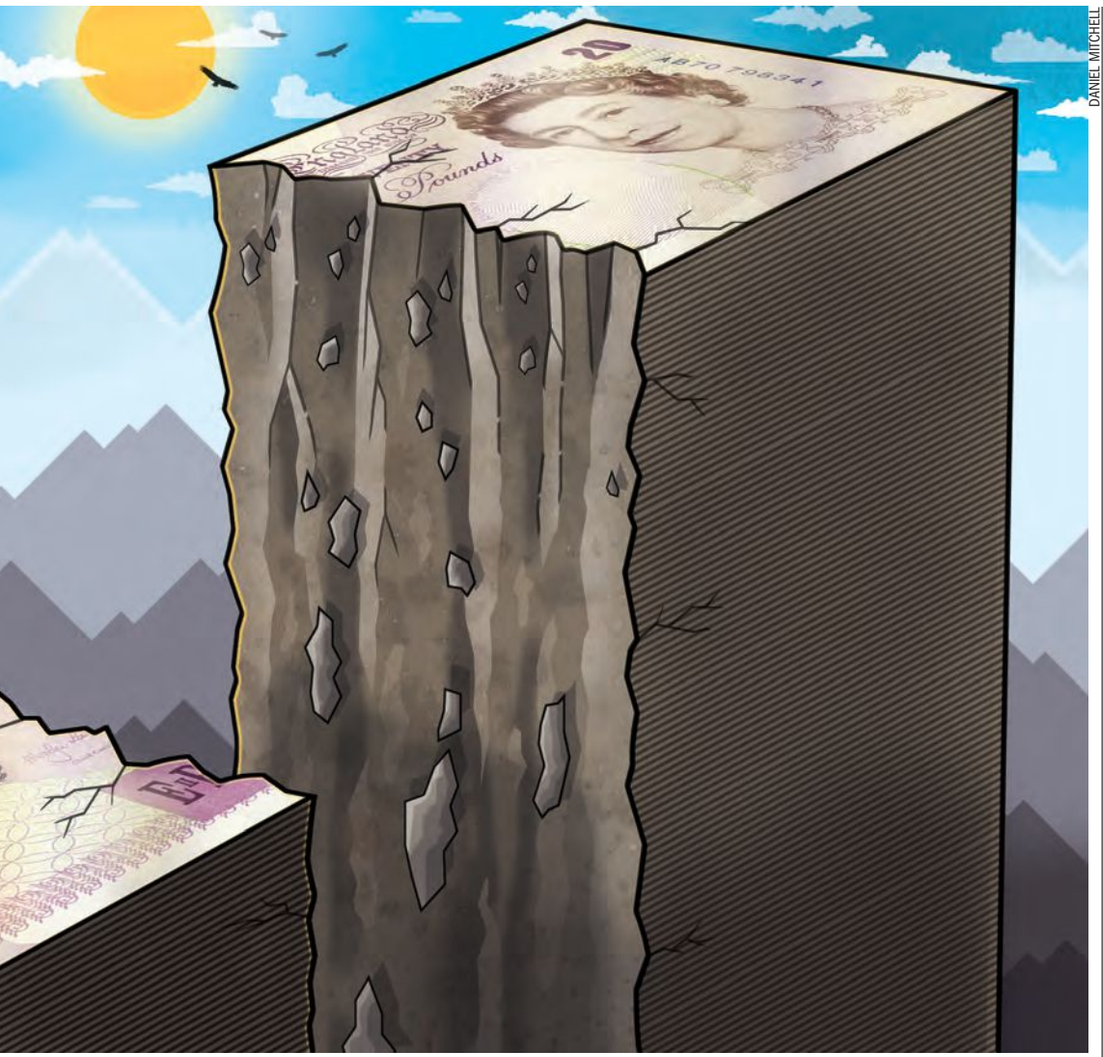


Last month, Andrew Adonis, a former Labour education minister, tackled the question of how English higher education could be paid for if his party's policy of abolishing tuition fees were enacted ("Is abolishing tuition fees regressive? It depends how it's done", Opinion, 17 August).

The funding gap that would be opened up by such a policy has been put at £11 billion. Adonis claims, first, that since some graduates will not repay their loans in full, the gap falls to £6.5 billion. But that is a highly speculative forecast because nobody can know what will happen to graduate earnings over the 30-year repayment period. There is no existing public spending on loan write-offs that could offset some of the costs of Adonis' new spending programme. So replacing fee income with public grants to universities would come at full cost.

The loan repayment terms are a matter of legitimate political decision. Jo Johnson, my successor as universities and science minister, is right when he says that it is a deliberate and progressive feature of the system not to collect repayments from low-income graduates – that is why we deliberately increased the repayment threshold to £21,000 from the indexed £15,000 that we inherited from Labour. If Adonis thinks that this threshold is too high and that graduates may not pay back enough, he can change it.

However, he can't choose what counts as



DANIEL MITCHELL

Irrelevant populism and flawed sums will not fill £11 billion gap

Andrew Adonis's account of how Labour could fund universities if tuition fees were abolished lacks credibility, says David Willetts

public spending. The rules, which neither are nor should be determined by ministers, put England's graduate repayment system outside public spending. That makes sense. It would be absurd if a government could treat the shifting forecasts of future loan write-offs as real public spending to be diverted to other purposes. So Adonis still has a funding gap of approximately £1.2 billion for every £1,000 he takes off fees.

Second, he suggests increasing revenue from international students. I agree that this is an important source of income, which we should promote. Indeed, that is why it is surprising that he supported the mistaken claims by *The Sunday Times* last month that international students were displacing domestic students. However, he cannot argue that extra overseas students will result from his policy on fees, so it is not a new source of income to offset that policy's cost.

Third, Adonis talks about the "bloated overheads, notably the pay of vice-chancellors and other top staff". Every organisation should, of course, make efficiency savings. But there are about 130 vice-chancellors in England, with average pay of about £250,000. So even if Adonis acquired the power that ministers currently lack to influence their pay, lowering the average by £100,000 would save only £13 million: about one-thousandth of £11 billion.

Finally, Adonis identifies some possible tax increases. But claiming that the tax would come from the affluent does not affect the real political argument, which is about relative priorities between different public spending programmes. He needs to show why it would be a priority to use extra revenues to help graduates – who, on average, earn £31,000 a year, compared with £22,000 for non-graduates.

This takes the debate full circle. It is now 20 years since the Dearing report – which first recommended fees – landed on then education secretary David Blunkett's desk. It was commissioned because universities were losing out in the battle for public spending to more popular causes, such as schools and hospitals. The devastating statistic in the report was that spending per student had fallen by 40 per cent from its peak – unlike spending on any other stage of education. Everyone who cared about the future of universities and a fair deal for students realised that the only way out was to end students' dependence on public spending to finance their education.

> **"It would be absurd if a government could treat the shifting forecasts of future loan write-offs as real public spending to be diverted to other purposes"**

Income-contingent student loans are not commercial loans, as in the US, or part of public spending, as the proceeds of a graduate tax would be. Steering a way between these two equal and opposite problems has led all three of the UK's main political parties to develop a similar solution when actually facing the practical constraints of government.

Adonis is supposed to be one of Labour's leading education experts, so we must assume his is the best explanation of how the party would compensate universities for the loss of fee income. It depends on bogus accounting, a populist campaign on vice-chancellors' pay that is irrelevant to the scale of the funding gap, and a gamble on big increases in public spending when there are many other claims on the public purse from far less affluent groups than graduates.

That is not the end of it. Public spending on universities is controlled by limiting student numbers, and it is always disadvantaged groups who lose out, as in Scotland.

We have an obligation to ensure that the education of our students is properly resourced. After failures by successive governments, we are finally fulfilling it. We must not betray our students again.

David Willetts was minister for universities and science between 2010 and 2014. His book, *A University Education*, is published in November. He and Andrew Adonis will be taking part in a debate organised by *Times Higher Education* next week; see www.timeshighereducation.com for details.

Wrung out and tossed out

Institutions' shabby treatment of casual academics gives lie to their stated commitments to education and dignity, says Jedidiah Evans

JAMES FRYER

It is not often that your views as a sessional academic are sought out by institutional hierarchies. So when a university where I used to work on a casual basis asked me to contribute to a survey measuring staff engagement, I embraced the opportunity.

In a previous piece for *Times Higher Education*, Hannah Forsyth and I argued that the exploitation of casual academics, while by no means a new phenomenon, is a systemic issue that demands attention. So if, in the following summary of my survey responses, I have excised the name of the university, it is not because it sought to address my concerns. It is because its failings are shared throughout Australia's tertiary sector, and addressing them should be viewed as a common responsibility.

How is our university going?

In our mission statement, assessment guidelines and core curriculum, we aim to reinforce the importance of a person's dignity, and to spur on staff and students to protect and champion the dignity of others. Human dignity is a nebulous thing, but it tends to be a characteristic of a thriving community: we might see something such as humiliation as its antithesis.

As a sessional staff member, I have felt the indignity of barely making rent. I have been forced to resign myself to working untold hours for no money. I have had promised work taken away without communication, and then been condescended to with a shrug and a bemused "sorry about that". I face each semester with the humbling anticipation of no work, or of too little work, or of work unrelated to my field or experience.

In a coordinating role, I am expected to be involved in the increasingly convoluted and onerous task of unit outline review. This involves countless emails, phone meetings, revisions, entire overhauls of web pages, toing and froing with administrative staff. And yet I am expected to do all this for nothing. I tracked 38 extra hours of work spent on this process alone this semester.

Nor do the two hours of face-to-face lecture time for which I am actually paid account for the hours of my preparation. I receive overwhelmingly positive reports for my units. Students stand and clap (would you believe it?) at the end of my final lectures. I respond diligently to their emails. I spend time with their essays. I deliver thoughtful and detailed content. I fashion myself as a co-learner: someone who comes alongside these students, conscious of their capacity to teach me and each other, aware of their profound dignity and worth. I aim to inspire them to extend this same generosity to others they encounter. And all the while, I cannot buy petrol or pay for my rail pass. I cannot dream of saving for a home, or even afford to rent one with any kind of security. I suffer the indignity of being expected to instil in my students something like moral responsibility, all the while enduring the reality of being cheap labour for a university that seems utterly uninterested in my own plight.

This university humiliates me while championing its own commitment to dignity.

How can we support you?

The most obvious form of support for a sessional staff member is more equitable remuneration and the promise (or at least the possibility) of more work. It is tricky to teach well when you are unsure that you will able to pay rent or buy groceries. It is difficult to teach well when you teach a unit once, and never have that unit again (and thus those resources become nearly worthless). It is difficult to teach well when you have no ongoing relationship with students because there are no repeat opportunities to work with them. It is difficult to teach well when the expectations of upper administration seem to misunderstand the primary values that the university stands for: that is, developing ethical citizens who generously serve and dignify others.

I can see how that might be achieved. I aim to do it, and I believe that I manage to do so, imperfectly, at times. But there has not been a single piece of administrative alteration or process change that has sincerely aimed to benefit students in this way. As far as I can see, each project is a solipsistic practice of self-congratulation. And I love this university truly. I love the opportunities it affords me. I love the students particularly. But the disconnect between the classroom and the boardroom is profound and unthinking. And one of the ways this is clearest is in the treatment of sessionals.

What do we do now?

I hope it is clear – despite my obvious frustration – that I do not approach this work from any sense of deep entitlement. The opportunity to work as an educator in a tertiary institution is one not afforded to many, and I am profoundly humbled by the opportunity. But we cannot live this way. We are this strange underclass of educators who are wrung out and then discarded.

Many of us hold the torch for the possibilities of education. Many of us still believe in our responsibilities to those who will inherit the future. Yet this university seems to be increasingly full of distant people whose responsibilities are to a corporate machine, well oiled by the high fees that students pay and by bequests with various strings attached. For now, we will keep doing this work, quietly and diligently. But we cannot continue for ever. We are being hollowed out. We are losing hope. And surely this is the last thing that this university wants as its legacy.

Jedidiah Evans is lecturing at the University of Wollongong this semester.

India is right to reset its goals for universities

The news about India's shelving its foreign universities "pipe dream" in favour of the creation of new domestic "institutions of eminence" ("India shelves its foreign universities 'pipe dream'", News, 24 August) is one of the best gifts the nation could give itself on the 70th anniversary of its independence from British rule. As long as this putative project is not mired in rhetoric, institutional bureaucracy and a scrambling for ideological hegemony, a radical reorganisation of its higher education base, nurtured and implemented locally, should offer new directions of travel for the country. The yoke of colonialism has found no other better resting place than in the systems, practices, pedagogies and management of the country's higher education sector. The new tryst with a sustainable destiny need not be realised in open markets for foreign providers or in the pursuit of "animal spirits" to secure world-class rankings.


GETTY

> **A radical reorganisation of its higher education base, nurtured and implemented locally, should offer new directions of travel**

"World class" is affordable only if "Indian class" is good enough to set standards for research that is not sacrificed at the altar of publishing but rather is aimed at satisfying the extended needs of the Indian mind to find full expression of its capabilities. World class will be affordable if it develops pedagogies, assessments and learning environments for entrepreneurial teaching based on non-reductionist, creative thinking and multi- and interdisciplinary modes of study to reflect cross-sectoral development needs. India's unique trinity of assets (land, human and social capital), diversity (of people, cultures and technological acumen) and freedom (democracy, and of the institutional kind that is not compromised by the transience of pseudo-ideology) should offer the necessary confidence for its institutions to work collaboratively with global counterparts, and particularly with partners in the South.

The reach of and depth in Indian higher education should be key development objectives. The Indian academic diaspora could act as the essential agents of leverage with the global knowledge creation and dissemination process. They can do so not by being ambassadors of any "superior excellence" together with their colleagues from their adopted countries (see Singapore's problems), but by being collaborators in a project where the objectives are set in India.

Philip Altbach points to understandable concerns about inadequate funding, bureaucratic problems and assumed politicisation as possible barriers for the "eminence" project. But these factors, together with a reductionist approach to excellence, have dominated the higher education headlines in the UK and elsewhere in more ways than one. The Indian goal cannot be the setting of second-hand world-class standards but rather the working-out of priorities under those constraints. In this, the UK and other better endowed nations can offer direct, collaborative support for productive change, and not just the export of its soft power or its own standard of excellence. The attempt to create a new basis for achieving one's own excellence and for setting global standards by countries in the South should not be seen as a possible threat to market expansion of UK and other universities. We need a new vision for collaboration and diversity in achievements.

Jay Mitra
Professor of business enterprise and innovation, Essex Business School
University of Essex


ISTOCK

Admin's burdens

I wonder whether "another academic", whose letter "State of the uni" bemoaned the "ludicrous amount of paperwork" in UK higher education (Letters, 24 August), could be induced to divulge which university he is describing? As an administrator, I would be delighted to apply for a job at an institution where the number of administrative staff is "ever-increasing" and where it is more efficient to ask the academics to complete and return forms than it is to do it yourself.

In my 10 years' experience in higher education administration, I have found that the increasing workload is constantly being shifted on to a decreasing number of shoulders, and academics are asked to fill out forms only when the administrators' powers of telepathy break down and they do not possess the information necessary to do it themselves (and even then the request is made with reluctance and in the expectation of three weeks' chasing while fending off almost identical chasing emails from the central office to whom the form is destined).

It would be a pleasant change to work in a fully staffed office, and the barbed comments from the academic colleagues about "these folk" would not be anything new.

Jo George
Via timeshighereducation.com

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Lower order letters

In her review of Janet Sorensen's *Strange Vernaculars*, Elspeth Jajdelska says the book "explains how the speech of criminals, provincials, the labouring classes and sailors was recreated in print to fit the needs of the nation state".

All languages started in the mouths of ordinary people. The lower orders did more to standardise English (and simplify its grammar) than in most languages, because English remained their main language for the three centuries after 1066 when the upper classes used mainly French. Sadly, they were unable to affect its spelling, because they were illiterate. They would most likely not have left it as irrational and chaotic as the succession of clever boffins did, starting with monks in the 8th century substituting "o" for "u" in words such as "love", "month" and "wonder" and culminating with Samuel Johnson wrecking English's consonant-doubling in the 18th century. Because of his veneration of Latin, he bequeathed us ridiculous inconsistencies such as "shoddy body, very merry, sloppy copy". If ordinary people were in a position to do so, they would quickly clear up this mess.

Masha Bell
Via timeshighereducation.com

Structural break

Emma Rees rightly pleads for a summer holiday away from "Lacan, Kristeva and Foucault too…" ("Crumbs of comfort on the beach", 24 August). Don't we all need a break as well from Saussure, the father of them all? Although, of course, in Malcolm Bradbury's view, we might not be saussure.

R.E. Rawles
Honorary research fellow in psychology
University College London

> **“Does the march forward by a neoliberal university sector obsessed with metrics and a false prestige mean we are missing the small stories that ethnographers take years to build up?”**

The middle-class academic elite are totally out

Lisa Mckenzie, research fellow in the department of sociology at the London School of Economi

Over the past year and a bit, I have watched the academic world flail around at Brexit, at Donald Trump and, this summer, at the Grenfell Tower fire. “How could these tragedies have happened?” they cry.

It is clear that this middle-class, liberal, highly educated section of society did not see these events coming.

I have written before about how academics – for all their erudition and knowledge – do not see the everyday troubles of working-class people. They have strongly denied this, blaming “poor polling” and inaccurate responses from people who have taken part in their surveys. But the truth is clear for any of us who have come from working-class families and communities: the middle-class academic elite are totally out of touch. And no balancing of their surveys is going to change that.

As a working-class academic and ethnographer, I was not at all surprised when Brexit happened, when the vote – especially in working-class communities – swung to “Leave”. In fact, if it had gone the other way

ALAMY

Dawn rises on a dark world of falsehoods

Sir Keith Burnett, vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield

If, like me, you have waited and hoped for a change in government policy on international students, you are probably feeling some relief and some well-deserved hope.

The statistical announcements on UK migration numbers confirm what many of us have thought for some time. The number of international students staying beyond the time permitted by their visas is extremely small. Previous estimates of some 100,000 “overstayers” were nonsense, based on what we always said was a deeply flawed method of surveying passengers in airports. That figure now appears to have been incorrect by more than 95,000.

The new figures, which correct that deeply damaging error, feel like dawn coming up on what has been a dark world of falsehoods. But we have also seen several false dawns in the past few years, and we should keep our plans for any celebrations on indefinite hold.

We know that we have many allies inside and outside Parliament who have listened to our case over the years. Cross-party select committees and even members of the Cabinet have called for change. In the House of Lords and the House of Commons, in business and in our various partner bodies, we have found allies who want to right this wrong.

I feel personally indebted to them all, in particular to the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Students led by Paul Blomfield and Lord Bilimoria. Both have been wonderfully persistent in keeping the rational case alive with lawmakers, and have spoken out on this issue. They will have more to do in the months ahead.

And of course we have wanted and needed to work with students. For all that our critics seek to divide us into consumer and provider, the values of international education mean the world to teachers and students alike. We will continue to speak together for our precious global communities of scholarship.

Now we sense a moment of opportunity, but we would be fools to be complacent. Instead we need to get ready for the real debate that will kick off now that the home secretary has announced a review of the impact of international students.

If the past few years have taught us anything, it is surely that we cannot assume that our desire to preserve the values of openness is shared. Xenophobia and accusations of elitism lie near to the surface. We should expect our views to be tested in every way. We hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

We’ll dust off the arguments that we have made in the past for the contribution that talented international students make to all our communities; for all the investment that it has driven inside and outside universities. We have the data, but we’ll need to use everything that we know and can justify, by hard numbers, to make sure that the benefit to the UK is fully appreciated.

And we must not be surprised by a counter-attack from those for whom the facts will not matter. Perhaps we shall see more raw xenophobic comments – a brief look at the tabloids makes clear that it has already begun in some quarters. Views that have been cloaked in the past by arguments about standards or the avarice of universities can lead to utterly untrue claims that international

# of touch

CS

I would have been shocked. I have spent years in working-class communities in Nottinghamshire and in London with people who cannot take any more excuses, lies and empty rhetoric from their supposed political representatives.

Being told that change will come, but in five years, or two years, with the next general election, is not good enough when even one year is too far away for women who are facing immediate eviction from London and being moved away from their families. The people in the Nottinghamshire mining communities have not seen their elected representatives for years because those MPs have been far too busy in Westminster. Meanwhile, their communities are being taken down to the lowest level of dignity, having to work in warehouses for Sports Direct and Amazon – and they can't stomach voting for any political representative who they feel is not physically or spiritually present in their communities.

And as Grenfell Tower burned in June, those of us who work within grass-roots and community campaigns in housing in London knew and feared this outcome. Many in my profession, however, did not. As I listened to a sketchy news bulletin at 2am on 14 June, reporting a fire at a tower block in West London and people jumping out of windows to escape, all I could think was that the building's inhabitants were considered by large sections of society to be "not good enough". They were not valued.

I have researched council estates and the views that both officials and wider society have held against people who need social housing. I knew that this lack of care, and the contempt for working-class people living in council tower blocks (especially in London, which is undergoing industrial-scale class cleansing), would eventually end in a disaster.

However, I was aware that the academic community in general did not see any of this coming. I have asked myself why the experts at our most prestigious universities fail to think about and write about the lives of the poorest people in our society. Does the constant march forward by a neoliberal university sector that is obsessed with metrics, scores and a false prestige mean that they are missing the small stories that ethnographers take years to build up?

The constant competition to publish mostly unfinished work in academic journals means that the wider story, the bigger issues affecting society, can never be thought through properly. And saddest of all is that working-class students, who are rooted in their communities and people and who could help to highlight the topics important to them, see nothing but the high, unjust prices now demanded by our universities – especially at postgraduate level.

If we value academic research, and if we want to know what is happening to the poorest people in our society, academia needs to change, and change significantly. The pressure to publish or perish before scholarly work is properly thought through needs to end. The narratives that are collected with care and over years by ethnographers need to be valued far more highly than they are now. After all, it was the ethnographers who saw Brexit and Trump coming. But most importantly, we must support and help the next generation of working-class researchers to find a place in academia. Without them, we are irrelevant.

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students take opportunities away from UK students, when in fact we know that the opposite is true.

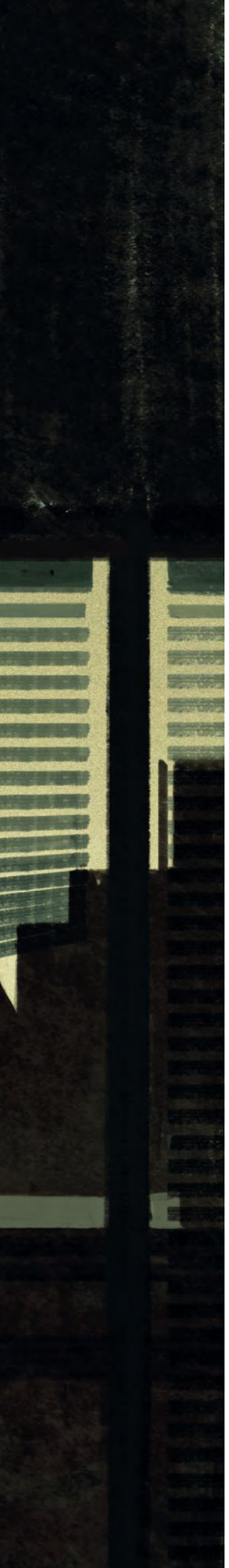
So many of our wonderful facilities and the opportunities for our young people to study costly subjects have been underpinned by students from China, India and the rest of the world.

We must anticipate the right-wing press printing any horror stories they can of international students' behaviour. Never mind that we know how much international students give to local communities through volunteering or how seriously most take their studies. All UK students for the purposes of these articles will be perfect by comparison.

We will need to respond to this seriously and to speak to others to make our case clear. In Sheffield, my adopted city, the economic case is devastating, and we shall be making sure that the business voice from across our region is heard. And that is a key point. It is others, not just universities, that will be key speakers in the debate. Let's make sure that they have the opportunity to speak.

But to me this is much more than a case for an enormous economic benefit. It is, more than anything, keeping the faith with a community of international students who have believed us when we said, "We Are International." Not "They", but "We".

We will not leave our dear students, colleagues and friends to face unjust criticism alone. Reputations have come unfairly under attack and rhetoric has been hurtful. We will stand together and mobilise our case in all its fullness. We have right on our side, and we will continue to speak up for universities that are home to talented staff and students from around the world.



Poisonous science

Bullying inside a high-powered lab led a gifted Ivy League scholar to commit a desperate act of scientific misconduct that cost him his career – and ultimately his life. The story of his suicide exposes ugly truths about the cruelty and dysfunction at the heart of academic science, says his widow

My husband was a brilliant scientist who committed suicide a few years ago. While he and I talked, often, about ways to share what happened to him in the high-pressure world of elite academic science, I have chosen not to share his name because I do not have his permission. Nor – much as I want to – will I name any other names. Apart from the legal issues, my husband always shied away from identifying his tormenters because he was terrified that his reputation would be further tarnished. Also, he was well aware that he was no angel and wasn't always good at handling conflict, so he didn't think that anyone would understand – or even believe – his side of the story.

But that side of the story is emblematic of the cruelty and dysfunction at the heart of cutting edge science, and, as his widow and as a fellow academic, I feel obligated to tell it. What happened to him reveals ugly truths and exposing them will, hopefully, concentrate some attention on how to address them.

In the hypercompetitive, unmanaged environments of big-time laboratories, senior scientists are free to bully, pressure and otherwise torment their graduate students and postdoctoral researchers without consequence – all just to get results that will help them to win research grants, publish papers and accrue accolades. In the US, these scientists are tenured, and therefore about as accountable for their actions as any 18th-century Southern planter was to his slaves.

In my husband's case, he was placed under so much abusive pressure by a ruthless senior Ivy League scientist that he resorted to a desperate act of scientific misconduct that cost him his career. I know that some people will say that he got what he deserved. But that will only serve to illustrate the lack of compassion that is at the heart of what is wrong with academia and that led, directly or indirectly, to the death of a kind, thoughtful man who loved science more than anything in the world.

For the purposes of this essay I will call my husband Patrick. A bit about his background demonstrates his ingenuity, drive and commitment to knowledge, and illustrates why his loss is all the more tragic.

Patrick's life was an exemplar of the American Dream, that rare Horatio Alger story in our increasingly stratified society. He was born in California to a very working-class couple; his Sicilian grandfather was a butcher and the only job his father could get after the Korean War was as a city playground supervisor. On the meagre salary this paid, and with the help of public food assistance, his parents raised four sons. But it wasn't easy. Patrick had to learn to grab what he could at the dinner table lest his older brothers eat everything first. I will never forget the look of stark terror in his eyes the first time that I brought home powdered milk to keep in the pantry for baking. Powdered milk was all that he had had to drink as a child, because it was free from the state. That small packet of Carnation brought back all the fear and insecurity that he had lived with as a small child. I had to reassure him that I would only use it in an absolute emergency, and that he would always have fresh milk to drink.

Perhaps because of this poverty, but more likely because he was brilliant even at a young age, Patrick became an inventive child. Aged five, he and his friends would ride the train into San Francisco and, pooling their pennies, head to Chinatown to buy as many fireworks as they could to sell to other neighbourhood kids for a modest profit. By the time he was eight, he was spending his nights at the local bowling alley, where he would record scores for drunken bowlers in exchange for a dime or quarter per game. Patrick always credited that experience with two things: his ability to light a match with one hand and his knack for the kind of maths wizardry you normally only see in movies.

Coming of age in California in the 1970s, his teen years were an *American Graffiti* stereotype of post-war American adolescence. After taking the bus to the top of a hill, he and his friends would ride their skateboards all the

> **His teen years were an American Graffiti stereotype of post-war American adolescence. After taking the bus to the top of a hill, he and his friends would ride their skateboards to the bottom at breakneck speed, screaming with fear and excitement**

way to the bottom at breakneck speed, screaming with fear and excitement. Despite hearing loss caused by measles in his infancy, and piercing, permanent tinnitus in his only hearing ear, he regularly went to open-air rock concerts with his friends. By contrast, his weeks-long solo backpacking trips in the Sierras allowed him to revel in the peace and solitude of nature. When he spoke of his youth, it was with a passionate joy about the kind of freedom that children had back then but don't have today, as well as deep gratitude that this freedom did not lead him into irreparable danger or harm.

In fact, Patrick got to experience some of the more formative events of the late 20th century. He was bussed out of his generally middle-class town to attend high school in one of the most crime-ridden cities in the state. While other white families rebelled against it, he was always grateful for the experience and remembered his high school years as a fruitful lesson in tolerance and diversity. Well-liked by everyone, his talents were so diverse that he was on both the football and chess teams. Like many boys his age, he fooled around with old cars and revamped the high-performance "muscle cars" so in vogue with young men at that time. At night, he and his friends cruised their local main streets, freewheeling across fog-ridden golf courses, filled with the daring and bravado of reckless youth who have no sense of their own mortality.

But his life wasn't all California sunshine and roses. His mother's health was poor, and one day, when Patrick was 13 or so, his father took her to hospital. Three days later, he returned home and told Patrick that she was dead: she had succumbed to leukaemia. And that was that. Patrick had not even known that she was sick. There was no funeral, no relatives to grieve with and to help his young boy's heart understand what had happened. His older brothers were, by this time, drug dealers and prison inmates, all members of hardcore biker gangs. And his father sank into a dark and deep depression, withdrawing from the world and unable henceforth even to acknowledge Patrick emotionally. "You've got a roof over your head until you're 18. What more do you want?" he once told him.

The only time his father ever addressed him in a substantive way again was when he told Patrick: "Your mother died because of you. If she hadn't had you, she'd still be alive." A few months after that, Patrick accidentally found his mother's ashes in a box in the garage when he was looking for some tools. He eventually moved in with a friend's family for almost a year during high school, just so that he didn't have to be alone all the time.

The remarkable thing about Patrick, though, was his character and integrity. Through all of these traumatic episodes, he came to the realisation that his friends were a bad influence, so he eliminated them from his life, buckled down, finished high school, and after some academic ups and downs, completed an undergraduate biology degree at a renowned university. After a few years working as a lab technician and publishing well-received research, he was awarded a full scholarship to a premier Ivy League institution, where he earned a PhD in genetics.

It was at his doctoral institution that Patrick first noticed problems with the ways that researchers conducted themselves in the labs. Although he had a supportive mentor, he was tormented by the behaviour of other faculty and graduate students. Stress in graduate school is fairly common, as are competitive relationships among students and selfish behaviour among supervising faculty. I certainly remember it in my graduate programme. But what goes on inside the literally rarefied air of the laboratory is an entirely different order of things.

Patrick told me that sabotage of experiments was common, and the stories shared on online forums by graduate students and postdocs today indicate that such behaviour still goes on. (Stories of poisonings in labs at Harvard in 2009 and Stanford in 2015 suggest that lab reagents are sometimes put to even worse uses.) He also told me of suicide attempts, including some successful ones, among science graduate students across the country. Once he even told me about getting into a physical altercation with one such saboteur, a faculty member who physically threatened him to such a degree that he had to defend himself. When Patrick appealed to the administration, nothing was done to reprimand the faculty member.

Nonetheless, he succeeded in completing his doctorate, and was offered many postdoctoral positions. The boy who came from the saddest house on the block could now go anywhere he wanted. He chose another high-powered lab at a different Ivy League school. And that's where everything began to fall apart.

His work involved investigating various infectious diseases, and he even hoped one day to discover a cure for the leukaemia that had killed his mother. Unfortunately, Patrick quickly realised that the work he loved was imperilled by a vicious culture of competition,

back-stabbing and more sabotage. He wrote a letter to a leading international newspaper expressing his concern over the competition that drove some scientists to hoard valuable research materials, for which he was attacked. But much of the bad behaviour came from a place he least expected it: his own mentor.

While I am not a scientist, I understand the incidents he told me about with enough clarity to realise that these things should never have happened in a professional environment. According to Patrick, his boss regularly reduced graduate students and postdocs to tears in front of the entire department. Lab members were required to account every week for what they had found and those with no new results to show were often threatened with dismissal – threats that were sometimes carried through. In Patrick's case, his supervisor also refused to fund further investigation of one of his successful results because the process would take "too long".

This continual stream of pressure and intimidation took its toll. One of Patrick's fellow postdocs nearly suffered a miscarriage and was hospitalised, while another signed himself into a psychiatric ward. These should have been red flags to any responsible manager, but when Patrick sought assistance from the departmental chair and then the dean, he was rebuffed, and no one investigated what was going on in his supervisor's lab.

A man who had survived the loss of his mother, overcome a childhood of neglect and loneliness, and used his brilliant mind to propel himself to the heights of academic achievement was now so plagued by the stress of never knowing from one day to the next whether he would have a job that he sought counselling. However, the antidepressant he was prescribed caused him so much distress that he ended up in a psychiatric ward himself.

During his 10-day observation, the university counsellor from whom Patrick had sought help repeatedly called him to ask if he would participate in an experiment she was conducting for her own research. She persisted despite Patrick repeatedly telling her that he needed to focus on his own health and well-being.

While in the hospital, he was put on five different psychoactive medications. These exacerbated his previously undiagnosed ADHD and led to impulsivity and a lapse of judgement that would ruin his career. Desperate to get the recommendation letter from his supervisor that he would need to move to another lab, Patrick decided to take his good data and manufacture the replications that he needed.

When he presented the data, his boss promptly took them and published them, no questions asked. Results were all that his supervisor cared about.

A year later, a scientist at another university claimed to the National Institute of Health's Office of Research Integrity that Patrick could not possibly have done those experiments successfully because he himself had not been able to. That was not true, of course. Patrick had successfully completed important work that was the basis of the published papers: he just hadn't been allowed to try to reproduce his findings. But, because he was no longer on all of those psychoactive medications, he knew that he had done the wrong thing by faking the replications. So he told the truth.

That's the kind of man Patrick was: once his head was cleared of the fog of stress, multiple medications, and fear of losing his job – the most terrifying thing in the world to a kid who grew up poor and neglected – he was able to acknowledge and take responsibility for actions that he had taken when he was not really himself. He told the truth despite being told by his attorney that the majority of scientists do not tell the truth when they are accused of scientific misconduct because there is no way to prove falsification: it's the scientist's word against the accuser's. The end result was that Patrick agreed to a three-year ban from applying for NIH funding.

All of this occurred as the era of internet shaming began, and Patrick's scientific misconduct was broadcast far and wide by people who never bothered to contact him to ask him about what happened. It soon became clear to him that he had no future in science.

So he tried to redirect his life. He went to law school and passed a gruelling one-year investigation by his state's bar association, which concluded that his misconduct had been caused by a combination of irresponsible mentorship and inappropriate medications. But he finished law school during the onset of the recession, and was unable to find a job.

He became increasingly despondent during the following years of unemployment. When he interviewed for legal positions, he was always forthright about his scientific misconduct, but that honesty cost him many opportunities. When he could no longer see a way out of his situation, he took his own life.

"The continual pressure and intimidation took its toll. One of Patrick's fellow postdocs nearly suffered a miscarriage and was hospitalised, while another signed himself into a psychiatric ward. These should have been red flags to any responsible manager"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATHERINE LAM

Some people will respond to this story by insisting that scientific misconduct is scientific misconduct no matter what the circumstances. I certainly used to think that way. In my own work, I have always been obsessive about verification and citation. I have had nightmares that wake me up, breathless and panicked, in which I discover too late that there is something in my book manuscript that was influenced by something I read when I was a child but that I failed to cite because I didn't remember it. I was lucky, though – I had supportive and responsible mentors who never placed their own reputations above their concern for their students.

That very training in the humanities also allows me to see the larger problem in the sciences that led to the tragedy of Patrick's experience. I know that context is everything. I know that scientific research occurs within the complicated spectrum of human behaviour. Of course it is important to highlight instances of scientific misconduct. But it is also important to learn from them, to understand how they arose and to take steps to prevent such situations from reoccurring. In a community of scholars, it is respect, cooperation and heart that produce the best and most useful knowledge for mankind, not pressure, ego and intimidation.

It is true that Patrick did not handle conflict well and probably made his situation worse without him realising it. I have heard other perspectives on what he was like at that time. But, immersed in an environment in which underhand practice was rife, in which the creation of nurturing, self-reflective and respectful academic relationships is trumped by the pursuit of fame, money and power, can he really be judged so harshly?

My own personal loss is catastrophic, but the loss of Patrick's scientific genius is greater. All he ever wanted to do was serve mankind by trying to solve the great riddles of destructive diseases. He helped so many people with their own medical situations – including my own mother, for whom he created a medication regime that gave her the only relief that she had ever had from her agonising rheumatoid arthritis.

The one thing I know, though, is that neither my pain nor our collective loss bears any comparison to the pain and loss Patrick felt when, sick with stress and fear, he resorted to a desperate act that he would never have condoned in other circumstances. No one could have been more critical and unforgiving than Patrick was of himself. In his last email message to me, which he wrote in his upstairs office a few moments before he took his own life, he said: "The world has no use for me. I am poisoned goods."

But it's not Patrick who was poisoned goods. It is the academic sciences. And until something is done about this, we will continue to lose great minds and sabotage our chances at scientific progress. ●

The author has chosen to remain anonymous.

Measured steps

Universities have embraced the use of big data to assist student learning. New electronic monitoring systems can track engagement and pinpoint those students at risk of dropping out. But is the learning analytics revolution the game changer for improving student outcomes that many claim? Is there a darker side to tracking learning? Here, an academic parent, a student and two researchers reflect on the pros and cons of the metrics approach

For responding too late to warning emails, my son was declared to have ‘failed to abide by the attendance policy of the university’

As an academic, I have learned much from watching how my own children have fared at university. The migraine suffered by one of them ahead of an assignment deadline of midnight on Sunday convinced me to set all my subsequent deadlines for 5pm on working days. Seeing another trying to revise from just 24 slides prompted me to build cumulative packs of slides for easy access. Noting the loneliness of en suite private accommodation, I consistently spread the message that accommodation design matters.

The effect of automated attendance monitoring systems came into my focus when, with two teaching weeks left and exams looming, my son was withdrawn for poor attendance from the first year of his maths course.

Newly installed at my son’s UK university, the student attendance monitoring (SAM) system was described as a student-friendly tool that would, in the words of the pro vice-chancellor, “allow us to see if someone is struggling and…to offer support as soon as possible”. Such systems, of course, also neatly deal with universities’ legal requirements to monitor the attendance of international students, and help to identify (in a crude correlation of attendance and achievement) students who might fail and, thereby, lower scores in the teaching excellence framework.

Such systems typically send auto-generated emails to students warning them of the consequences of non-attendance and suggest ways to get in touch with someone if they need help. My son was sent four such emails. The first was in early December. He didn’t notice the second, in late February, and he replied to the third, sent in mid-March, too late: three days before the fourth and final warning was sent. He was thereby declared to have “failed to abide by the attendance policy of the university, despite being contacted repeatedly”.

What had gone wrong was that, first, he had not understood what was expected of him. He had failed to compute that when his coursebook said that he was “being asked to scan your student ID card at entry points into most lecture rooms”, it meant that he was being required to do so (he hadn’t even had a student card to scan during the first semester). When he appealed against his withdrawal, noting that he hadn’t had much time to respond between reading email three and receiving email four, the adjudicator wrote that he had a “duty to read email”. That was news to him, too.

Second, you have to question whether a system intended to “offer support as soon as possible” should wait until six or more weeks into the teaching term before emailing a student who has, according to scanned-in data, been to no classes at all. By this point, habits have been formed. Even if the student reacts by then attending a few classes, engagement with the course is already shaky. Such cases surely require earlier and probably more personalised intervention – involving, perhaps, a visit from a second- or third-year student to see what can be done.

Third, my son was studying during the early adopter phase of a new system. SAM systems change the behaviours of academics. My son had initially completed a couple of weekly worksheets, but not one of the five academics who were teaching him got in touch after his hand-ins dried up. These were, in my son’s words, “great lecturers”, but they probably felt that tracking their students was no longer their responsibility, and they were probably unaware that the SAM system was not taking care of these things, either. I say this because I reacted in exactly the same way to the implementation of a SAM system at my own institution.

My son and I move on. He has no regrets, and I want no replays. He is figuring out what to do when a degree is no longer an option, and I am trying to unpick what strategy would help guys like him “hack education”, as he puts it.

My conclusions so far are that universities should be required to ensure that students fully understand requirements around reading emails and SAM systems. Potentially life-changing emails should be sent with “have read” receipts, and should be followed up with further warnings, including physical letters, if they are not read. And staff should be clear about what their institutions’ SAM systems are doing and be able to influence the behaviours of such systems to support students in developing effective learning habits.

It may be that my son was always going to do what he did. But it is at least conceivable that things might have ended differently if the SAM system had been better embedded. Successfully implementing a new technology takes time; the university admitted that when it warned at the outset that “there may be teething problems…so please be patient”. Why, then, did it come down so harshly on someone who fell through the safety net that it was supposed to be providing?

My son was at least lucky that he had me to talk to and also had the support of friends as his university adventure came to an abrupt halt. The ending could have been much darker had he been alone with a migraine in a luxury en suite room.

Janet Read is professor of child-computer interaction at the University of Central Lancashire.

PICTURES: ALAMY

Learning analytics can help students identify their most suitable time of day to learn, and which methods are most effective for them. And it can allow lecturers to insist on more engagement from students

We are in the age of data. Just look around: everyone has a smartphone or an activity tracker analysing their heartbeat, counting the steps they take, and monitoring how many hours they sleep. At the end of their day, owners of these devices can see exactly how they spent their time. What if we could do that for student engagement?

With learning analytics, it is possible to see how students learn and which resources they choose. This has huge potential for e-learning resources in higher education. We can now visualise, click by click, how individual users interact with resources. We can not only see that they got a 55 per cent, but we can pinpoint areas where they went wrong and, from that, work backwards to find out why. We can analyse student interaction with simulated environments, virtual patients (for medics and vets), videos, e-books and quiz-style applications.

Each student's unique "learner record store" allows them to see how they have spent their time learning and how well they have performed, including relative to current and previous cohorts. Over time, students can

It may be the case that the online shopping metaphor that underpins this approach to student learning is incompatible with the aims of higher education conceived as an ethical project

In a world of escalating accountability and competition, higher education managers are increasingly turning to automated learning analytics systems to guide both their own and their students' decision-making.

Learning analytics now provide students with advice about which courses to take, and where and how they need to improve. In the flipped classroom model, they are even taking on the role of tutor, making the work of the academic more to do with the tracking and monitoring of student progress than imparting the accumulated wisdom of years of immersion in intellectual endeavour.

All this stems from the recent transformation of the landscape in which universities operate. The demographics of the student body have changed profoundly with the massification and commoditisation of higher education. At the same time, the growth of student numbers has been accompanied by reduced opportunities for personal guidance and tuition as staff-to-student ratios deteriorate.

Global comparison, competition and enhanced accountability have led to increased sensitivity to the risks of student failure and dropout. The UK's teaching excellence framework is the latest manifestation of increased scrutiny of student satisfaction, completion rates and destinations data. The temptation to pore over the data produced as a by-product of online learning is thus readily understandable.

Increasingly, students and staff who log on to their institutional "learning management systems" are presented with "performance" data. For staff, these include "retention centres" that identify students at risk of failure, while students are presented with "dashboards" that display measures of progress and suggest learning activities or directions. These provide managers with new and varied quantitative metrics on retention and engagement hours that seem readily transformable into league tables or performance targets, and on which decisions at the micro, meso and macro levels might be made.

But unlike carefully designed experimental studies, learning analytics are parasitic, relying on incidental data generated as students pass through the university system – data that are then analysed through the application of algorithms designed in largely non-theoretical ways. In fact, these systems are mostly derived from the field of business intelligence. The recommendation algorithms on shopping sites such as Amazon ("customers who bought this also bought…") are being implemented to suggest alternative readings or learning activities to students and their teachers.

Enthusiasts claim that these approaches herald a brave new world of personalised learning, in which exactly the right advice and prompts are provided at exactly the right time. But empirical research into the effectiveness of such systems remains

identify their most suitable time of day to learn, and which methods are most effective for them. Similarly, students' working habits can be reviewed by staff to identify those struggling and to suggest remedies, minimising the chances of their dropping out.

But the benefits of learning analytics are not all one-way. They also offer academics a significant boon. Many universities currently use student evaluations when assessing a teaching academic's promotion application, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the results of such exercises can be biased by a lack of student engagement with modules that are challenging and associated with a higher failure rate.

Using learner analytics, we can identify users who engage with material and those who do not. In my view, it makes perfect sense to "red flag" a student's feedback if they have not met a predetermined threshold of engagement. It would allow lecturers (and their assessors) to view feedback from those students differently – or even discount it altogether. As well as offering protection for academics who have more challenging modules to teach, this would also allow content creators a chance to use interaction feedback to refine their resources, combating information overload.

Educational theory reminds us that retention of information and levels of understanding are increased by active learning. Many academics have tried to adapt their sessions to include active learning, such as introducing quizzes and discussions into lectures, or providing e-learning resources in various formats, including games. Learning analytics will allow them to much more accurately assess the effectiveness of these interventions.

Furthermore, learning analytics can help staff tackle the resistance to active learning that students typically show. This resistance arises from the fact that active learning is much more challenging than traditional, passive instruction and, as a result, requires more effort. Academics who introduce such innovations into the curriculum can therefore suffer in student assessments and may retreat into exam-focused teaching by rote. The risk is that this kind of approach leaves students underprepared for life after university.

I am not suggesting that we assess students on the basis of their engagement rather than their exam or dissertation scores. But the introduction of learning analytics could provide insight into whether increased engagement with course material correlates with attainment and, if so, galvanise lecturers' efforts to insist on engagement without worrying how that might affect their scores in student evaluations.

Of course, students will in all likelihood oppose the introduction of learning analytics, condemning it as some kind of sinister, Big Brother imposition. But the strongest resistance is likely to come from the least engaged, who fear being rumbled. Those students need to ask themselves whether they are attending university to enhance their cognitive ability or simply in an attempt to prolong their time as schoolchildren before actively having to challenge themselves.

Simon Patchett is a final-year veterinary student at the University of Nottingham. He recently intercalated a postgraduate certificate in veterinary education and became an associate fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

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ambiguous. Part of the reason might be variations within the student cohorts studies, and the different contexts across disciplines, programmes, year levels and modules. But it may also be the case that the online shopping metaphor that underpins this approach to learning is incompatible with the aims of higher education conceived as an ethical project.

Recent research in which we have been involved has looked at this. We studied different data types from an online master's-level module at the University of Stirling for practising schoolteachers and compared them with qualitative indicators of learning. These included submissions to the module, which took the form of blog posts and online comments written by students, short essays and contributions to discussion forums about other students' work.

We found that the quantitative data did indeed exhibit patterns that might be recognised through machine learning, and so be amenable to analysis and metric-generation in learning analytics systems. However, we also found highly complex behaviours and correlations. It was clear that for some students, high levels of online engagement were no indicator of successful learning outcomes, while for others, significant learning was possible despite levels of online engagement that would have most likely triggered warnings of failure in automated systems.

Our experiments with do-it-yourself learning analytics highlight the dangers of any system that drives student behaviour towards a statistically measurable norm that is unlikely to represent the best learning path for every individual. For example, recommender systems of the type used in business intelligence software may not only be difficult to adapt to learning environments but could even be counterproductive if the wrong advice is given to the wrong student.

We do not wish to suggest that the kinds of data that drive learning analytics are never useful. However, it seems clear that universities, departments, course conveners and individual academics need to take a cautious, critical approach, exploring in their own contexts the limits of what can be ascertained from click-based learning data.

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Saudi Arabia produces more than *15 million tonnes* of solid waste a year. KAU's research group is trying to solve two problems at once by pioneering ways of turning waste into energy.

Humanity faces many challenges but *King Abdulaziz University* strives to tackle issues surrounding sustainability and putting the world first.

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Happiness lies in your own hands

Meet the women whose lusty revolution changed the sexual culture of the US, says Laura Frost

Vibrator Nation: How Feminist Sex-Toy Stores Changed the Business of Pleasure
By Lynn Comella
Duke University Press
296pp, £79.00 and £20.99
ISBN 9780822368540 and 68663
Published 8 September 2017

You never forget your first vibrator. According to a 2009 study by Indiana University, almost 50 per cent of American women have played with the pulsating devices. That number has undoubtedly climbed thanks to pop-culture phenomena such as *Fifty Shades of Grey* and marked changes in the "adult industry". Gone are the days when all sex shops were dives hawking crotchless polyester knickers and sticky men's magazines, with a dodgy peep show in the back. The sex-toy business has boomed into a purportedly $15 billion (£11.5 billion) a year trade that is increasingly high-end, sophisticated in design and aggressively courting female consumers.

Today's woman-centric sex gadgets come in all colours and shapes. The packaging is tasteful, the aesthetic is slick and modern, and the marketing taglines boast high-minded goals ("revolutionizing women's health") and appeal to neoliberal self-care culture: Gwyneth Paltrow's lifestyle website Goop touted a $15,000 gold-plated vibrator. Pleasing women is big business.

As *The New York Times* recently observed in a profile of the Eva vibrator ($109), there is "a recent surge of products that embraces feminism as part of its marketing". Is this just a ruse to part women from their hard-won 79 cents for every dollar a man earns?

Lynn Comella's *Vibrator Nation: How Feminist Sex-Toy Stores Changed the Business of Pleasure* makes the case that our carnal climate was created by a handful of second-wave feminists, sexperts and sex radicals who forged new models of commerce to transform the demographics of access, profit and pleasure. It is a riveting account of the "gravitational shift" in an industry "long dominated by men and viewed by many as antithetical to feminism". Comella, a professor of gender and sexuality studies at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, is a lively and authoritative observer-participant who conducted six months of fieldwork at the Manhattan sex boutique Babeland. Blending history, ethnographic and archival research, and interviews with the founding mothers of vibrator nation, Comella tells the story of how feminism and consumer capitalism came together in an awkward embrace that nevertheless changed the sexual culture of America.

Academia's finest sex-toy monograph to date, Rachel Maines' *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction* (1999), set the bar high with its bold analysis of how the vibrator was invented in the Victorian period as a medical device to relieve hysteria. Comella picks up several decades after Maines left off, in a post-war America puzzling through Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and the rise of second-wave feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s. For many women, feminist consciousness-raising meant not just sociopolitical equality but also orgasmic liberation as a form of empowerment.

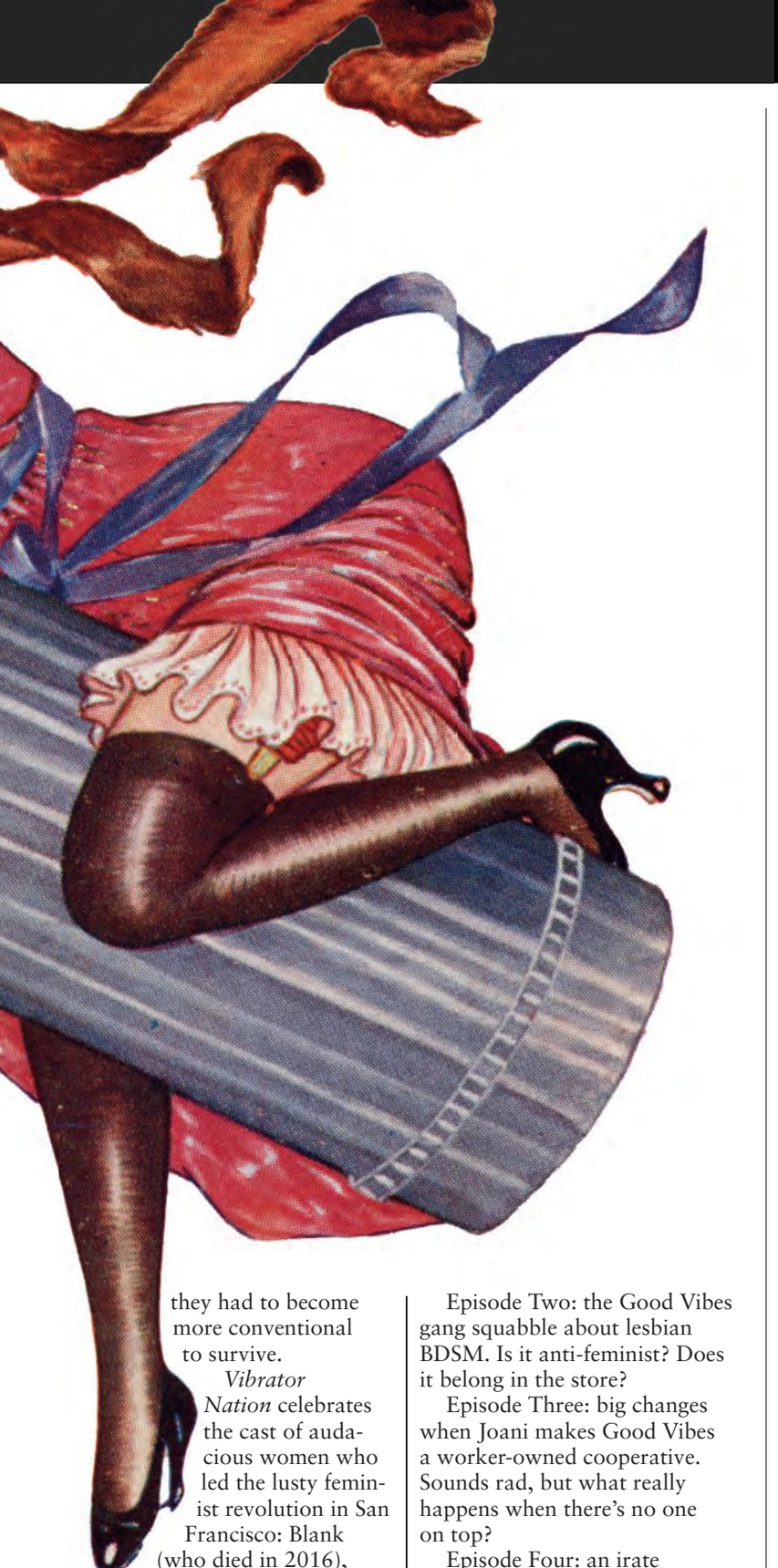
The Ur-scene of the feminist sex-toy revolution, as Comella tells it, was when a divorced former Second World War Women's Army Corps entertainer-turned-advertising executive, Del Williams, was embarrassed while trying to buy a vibrator at Macy's in the 1970s. Williams launched a mail-order business, Eve's Garden, that by 1979 had blossomed into a store in a midtown Manhattan office building: the first bricks-and-mortar feminist sex shop in America.

> **"Blank realised the need for a women-friendly sex retail environment and founded Good Vibrations in 1977 as a 'clean, well-lit' space offering advice as well as a private room for testing the products – *over* clothes"**

The real incubator of the feminist sex-toy uprising, though, was Joani Blank's Good Vibrations in San Francisco, which Comella describes as "a tiny shop about the size of a parking space, with macramé hangings on the walls and a display case full of antique vibrators". Through her work as a sex educator and therapist, Blank realised the need for a women-friendly sex retail environment. She founded Good Vibrations in 1977 as a "clean, well-lit" space "especially but not exclusively for women", offering advice as well as a private room for testing the products – *over* clothes. In its early days, Good Vibrations was as devoted to creating a community as it was to merchandising. When she began, Blank didn't have an inkling of a business plan. She just wanted to get the goods out there.

Comella credits Blank with "setting the stage for a sex-positive diaspora that would soon spread to cities across the country". It was based on a business ethic valuing education, integrity and generosity over the hard sell or the upsell. Blank championed a "communitarian, non-competitive ethos", practising social entrepreneurship long before it was trendy. When Good Vibrations moved to a larger space, she hired employees as "sex educators" who had virtually no training in retail. Selling was an afterthought.

While sharing the utopian stance of her subjects – "making the world a better place, one orgasm at a time" – Comella doesn't sugar-coat the story. Eve's Garden and Good Vibrations "were not nonprofit entities, but in many ways they operated as though they were" – and



they had to become more conventional to survive.

Vibrator Nation celebrates the cast of audacious women who led the lusty feminist revolution in San Francisco: Blank (who died in 2016), Susie Bright, Carol Queen and other sex-positive pioneers. A crash course in contemporary gender and sexuality studies, Comella's book could be a television series every bit as juicy as *Sex in the City* or *Transparent*.

Good Vibrations, Episode one: The politics of products! Susie convinces a reluctant Joani to stock porn videos and silicone dildos at the store: Joani explains that she isn't "anti-dildo but rather pro-clit".

Episode Two: the Good Vibes gang squabble about lesbian BDSM. Is it anti-feminist? Does it belong in the store?

Episode Three: big changes when Joani makes Good Vibes a worker-owned cooperative. Sounds rad, but what really happens when there's no one on top?

Episode Four: an irate customer mistakes a butch lesbian employee for a man. The crew raps about gender fluidity and queer and trans identity, and GV hires its first male sex educator.

Episode Five: Joani and Carol infuriate other staffers when they propose a porn series called "The Girls of Good Vibrations". When is sex work selling out?

Episode Six: The business takes a dive. GV is bought by a Midwestern adult company. What will happen to Joani's dream?

Tracing the hard lessons of Good Vibrations to other stores it inspired such as Early to Bed, Self Serve, Sugar and Feelmore, Comella focuses on Babeland, drawing on her insider knowledge of its history, politics and philosophy ("Getting a dildo or a vibrator might not change the world, but acting in the interests of your own desire may change you!"). She also looks at the company's labour practices, including the time when its employees decided to unionise. Like Good Vibrations, Babeland faced a drop in revenue and was forced to confront "the very real struggle between capitalism and the mission".

After *Vibrator Nation* went to press, Babeland was sold to Good Vibrations. Far from the scrappy venture it was in 1977, Good Vibrations is now a large corporation, albeit a self-declared "progressive" one. With major chains such as Walmart and Target selling sex toys, will independent stores endure? How will bricks-and-mortar shops compete with e-commerce?

Another twist in sex-positive capitalism is the burgeoning field of sex tech. Innovations in electronic eros, including smart toys, virtual reality porn, teledildonics and digital domains are the new frontiers of sex culture. The commodification of sexuality is as lucrative as ever, and women's sexuality in particular is considered a ripe market opportunity. But who really benefits when entrepreneurs capitalise on "the orgasm gap"? Very often, sex tech's marketing ploy is that female sexuality is mysterious, difficult and requires outside intervention. By contrast, the goal of early feminist sex shops was to help women "own" their sexuality, not to create never-ending consumerist desire to assuage anxieties about it. Sex sells, but that's not always a good thing.

Laura Frost is a writer and cultural critic who was formerly a professor of literature at both Yale University and The New School in New York. She is also the author of *Sex Drives: Fantasies of Fascism in Literary Modernism* (2001) and *The Problem with Pleasure: Modernism and Its Discontents* (2015).

THE AUTHOR

Lynn Comella, associate professor of gender and sexuality studies at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, grew up in Erie, Indiana. She did a first degree in psychology, with minors in women's studies and anthropology, at Pennsylvania State University, followed by an MA in gender studies and feminist theory at The New School for Social Research in New York City.

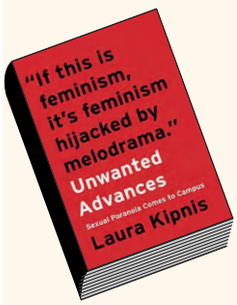
"Discovering women's studies and anthropology as an undergrad student, and learning how to analyse the gendered dimensions of everyday life, was a turning point," she says. Although she "left The New School with a very solid foundation in social theory", it wasn't until she went on to a PhD programme in communication at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst that she "learned how to conduct original research...It was also at UMass where my interests in gender and sexuality coalesced into a research agenda that I've been pursuing ever since."

Her PhD, which eventually became *Vibrator Nation*, arose out of Comella's interest in "examining those spaces and places where female sexuality assumed a public presence, as opposed to being relegated to the privacy of the home". In many ways, she thinks, it is "a very productive and exciting time for serious scholarship on sexuality", including pornography and "the adult industry", and such work is "increasingly finding institutional support in the form of research appointments, academic journals and professional organisations". Yet she acknowledges that "it's not unusual for researchers who study stigmatised topics and communities to find their research – and sometimes themselves – similarly stigmatised, discredited or marginalised". She feels "very fortunate to live in Las Vegas, a city known for its highly gendered and sexualised economy. I'm also lucky to work at a university that invites researchers to pursue unconventional research agendas."

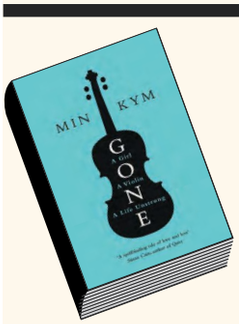
Matthew Reisz

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

A weekly look over the shoulders of our scholar-reviewers



Sir David Eastwood, vice-chancellor, University of Birmingham, is reading Laura Kipnis' **Unwanted Advances: Sexual Paranoia Comes to Campus** (Harper, 2017). "The central focus of this hugely readable book is the disputes at Northwestern University around Title IX sex discrimination regulations; and its principal purpose is to warn that 'the traditional ideal of a university – as a refuge for complexity, a setting for the free exchange of ideas – is getting buried under an avalanche of platitudes and fear'. Laura Kipnis elaborates a compelling critique of the way in which Title IX had come to be deployed and thus reveals the extent to which its purpose and place in the academy have been undermined by misuse. Kipnis has herself been the subject of a Title IX suit, for an article she was commissioned to write for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, which gives her analysis an authenticity that is as compelling as it is raw. A courageous, timely and necessary book."



Karen McAulay, performing arts librarian and postdoctoral researcher, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, is reading Min Kym's **Gone: A Girl, a Violin, a Life Unsprung** (Viking, 2017). "Since I work in a conservatoire surrounded by musical talent, violinist Min Kym's book was a natural choice. Growing up as a Korean child prodigy in England posed difficulties at home, school and college, not to mention with her wider family in Korea. There are valuable insights into a musician's rather complex relationships with her teachers and advisers, and interesting commentary on her approach to the music itself and the challenges of forging a satisfying career, but of course Kym's relationship with her beloved Stradivarius – and her devastation at its theft – forms the central theme. Its retrieval turns out less of a happy ending than one might expect. A poignant and relatable account."

R.C. Richardson, emeritus professor of history, University of Winchester, is reading Jack Simmons' **St Pancras Station** (Allen and Unwin, 1968). "Today this imposing station is enjoying a new lease of life as the Eurostar terminal, and the Gothic cathedral-like hotel at the front of it is once more luxuriously alive and well. But it is salutary to turn to this book, written when all these buildings faced a very uncertain future. Simmons expertly charts the stages in St Pancras' planning and construction and their challenges – few railway routes into London posed more problems – and offers appreciative assessments of both W.H. Barlow's engine shed and Sir Gilbert Scott's hotel and station frontage. Few would now dispute his verdicts on this combined engineering and architectural Victorian masterpiece and his firm conviction that it had a working future."

Modern struggle has deep roots

Protest movement against racial oppression in US belongs to a long tradition, says Martin Myers

The Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea
By Christopher J. Lebron
Oxford University Press, 216pp, £18.99
ISBN 9780190601348
Published 15 June 2017

Black Lives Matter, the social movement, and #BlackLivesMatter, the social media brand, emerged after the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer in 2013. The evidence revealed an unarmed teenager shot dead by an armed man. What made the verdict unsurprising was that Martin was black and his killer white. #BlackLivesMatter quickly became the focus for the anger felt at the regularity with which tragedies such as Martin's death recur.

Christopher Lebron's short, incisive book examines the racialised violence that defines US history: from the overt violence of slavery to the racial segregation of Jim Crow legislation, from white supremacist lynchings to the covert white privilege of society today. Lebron argues that this violence found a natural home in Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign. This perspective is corroborated by the seeming impunity felt by heavily armed white supremacists chanting "Hail Trump" while making Nazi salutes in Charlottesville last month.

Lebron places this continuum of black oppression within other continua of black protest and black political and cultural thought. Deploying the voices of earlier activists, artists and thinkers, he situates #BlackLivesMatter as the most recent manifestation of long-standing protest. When Kendrick Lamar sang *Alright* atop a graffiti-emblazoned police car against the backdrop of the US flag, he followed in the radical footsteps of black artists of the Harlem Renaissance advocating "for black agency in order to bring integrity and balance to American democracy". Similarly, Black Lives Matter reiterates the lessons of Frederick Douglass and Ida Wells that white people need to acknowledge their racism personally and institutionally for democracy to have meaning and significance.

What is surprising in Lebron's argument is the centrality that he sees love as playing in democratic discourse. Martin Luther King's somewhat "impersonal", theological love is explored, but Lebron places greater emphasis on James Baldwin's more secular account. For Baldwin, "the basic truth about rights is that they are near useless for the oppressed so long as they live in a society that abandons, neglects, abuses, mortally threatens, cajoles, and holds them in contempt". Self-love can repair the damage done to individual identities, but it is by loving others that we build partnerships, place our own and others' vulnerabilities on the line and take responsibilities. In this account, "Love delivers what democracy promises: equality and fairness." Yet Lebron treats love in a tough, unsentimental fashion that never excuses violence or oppression. Describing the testimony of the sister of a victim of a white supremacist's mass murder, he notes how her "forgiveness was offered in light of her anger, not despite it".

Such anger plays out provocatively when Lebron places the black intellectuals he admires against the foils of contemporary conservative black commentators whose "intellectualism is essentially white liberalism gone terribly awry". In a post-mortem of their failings, he offers no scrap of comfort to any intellectual position that does not recognise that black lives matter on their own terms. Lebron never sets out to provide a historical assessment of Black Lives Matter but contextualises the movement within black political and ethical thought, while lauding the achievements of people who have maintained their morals and dignity in the face of oppression and violence.

Martin Myers is a lecturer in education at the University of Portsmouth.

PICTURES: ALAMY

Separate states is there opportunity alongside architectural brutality and social displacement?

Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary

By Ronald Rael
University of California Press
208pp, £24.95
ISBN 9780520283947
Published 11 April 2017

The past 25 years have witnessed a major growth of interdisciplinary research in border studies. Much of this renaissance came in response to the discourses of the late 1980s and early 1990s about the "borderless world" that was sure to emerge as a result of the collapse of borders between East and West, the opening of borders throughout the European Union and a general feeling of greater geopolitical peace and harmony.

Little did we expect that borders would come back as they have during the past decade, largely through the homeland security discourses that have become prominent in the wake of 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks, coupled with the growing (and related) antagonism towards cross-border freedom of movement for refugees and economic migrants. This was highlighted even further by the discussions during last year's Brexit vote in the UK.

Not only have borders returned, but walls, fences and barriers are being constructed throughout the world at a pace no one could have imagined at the time the Berlin Wall came crumbling down. Ugly features of the physical landscape, the new borders rely not so much on soldiers armed with machine guns as on a sophisticated, modern plethora of technological surveillance techniques and equipment, often invisible to those who attempt to cross illegally, but all-seeing to those whose job it is to make such crossings as difficult as possible.

The past two decades have seen a new genre of border studies, focusing on the visual and architectural dimensions of the new border monstrosities and the ways in which such features of the landscape impact upon the local people. Nowhere is this more apparent than in two border landscapes: the concrete wall and electrified fence separating Israel from the West Bank and – the subject of this book – the wall and barrier that has been constructed along large swathes of the US-Mexico border and which, under the presidency of Donald Trump, is likely to be extended and further fortified.

Within this context, *Borderwall as Architecture* is a timely re-examination of what the physical barrier that divides the United States of America from the United Mexican States is and could be. But alongside the architectural brutality and social displacement that almost automatically accompany such borders, Ronald Rael and his contributors also explore the ways in which highlighting the border can be transformed into new opportunities.

Coupled with the negative impact of the wall, aimed at keeping people out (and evidenced in its effects on people, animals, the natural and built landscape), they seek ways to continue to engage both sides in dialogue and to see the realities of the border as an opportunity for creating something new.

This is an approach that goes beyond the traditional binary perspectives of "closed" and "open" borders. Rael and the other contributors – prominent social scientists and public figures – seek to develop new modes of engagement in spite of the barrier, rising to the challenge that has been put to local residents. The book both reports on the situation and sets out a course of action to be tested in the years to come. It has much to teach those in other border regions throughout the world that experience the resealing of borders in the name of securitisation.

David Newman is professor of political geography and geopolitics at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.


GETTY

Finding freedom in frivolous fun

A generation of young women chose dancing over more ‘respectable’ pursuits, finds Clare Griffiths

When the Girls Come Out to Play: Teenage Working-Class Girls’ Leisure between the Wars
By Katharine Milcoy
Bloomsbury, 176pp, £65.00 and £19.99
ISBN 9781474279598 and 9581
Published 7 September 2017

Among a series of talks in Bermondsey, South-East London, in 1922, one speaker chose as his topic “The Girl with the Limited Outlook”, taking aim at those who “hung about street corners and whistled at boys”. As youthful behaviour goes, that seems fairly mild stuff, but Katharine Milcoy is interested in the ways that young women of a certain age and class were identified as a problem, partly on the grounds of what they chose to do with their leisure time.

The “invention” of the teenager has commonly been understood as a product of affluence and consumerism in the 1950s. Milcoy, however, suggests that working-class girls and young women between the wars were already pioneering a teenage lifestyle, shaping new identities and experiences through fashion and entertainment. Focusing on those between the ages of 13 and 20, her study examines the interval between childhood and motherhood. She asserts that these girls (as she always refers to them) were “more than wives and mothers in the making”, aspiring to a more glamorous identity inspired by stars on the big screen and refusing to be cowed by elders’ warnings about the moral peril of cocktails and lipstick.

Much of the book is taken up with summarising existing interpretations of leisure, popular culture, class and gender, and the resulting discussions are not always directly relevant to Milcoy’s stated focus on working-class girls – let alone the specific locale of Bermondsey, which emerges as a case study. But a series of interviews from the late 1990s involving local women born between 1907 and 1918 offers possibilities for understanding what leisure meant to them, and how they spent their time and money.

Milcoy characterises Bermondsey in the interwar years as a place with plentiful employment opportunities for young women, in highly mechanised production and food processing. Repetitive, and not that well paid, the work was at least readily available and presented an attractive alternative to domestic service. The workplace had its own camaraderie, and some surprising perks: among the leisure facilities available at the Peek Frean biscuit factory in the early 1920s was a rifle range.

Having fun did not necessarily cost a lot of money. Wheezes such as “bunking in” through the exit at the cinema or fooling doormen at dances by flashing tickets of roughly the right colour allowed young women to enjoy a commercialised world of entertainment that would otherwise have exhausted their modest incomes. Girls’ clubs were anxious to fill young women’s spare time with more constructive, respectable pursuits, such as evening classes teaching domestic skills. Courses in dressmaking had greater appeal, as an affordable route to acquiring the latest fashions.

In the absence of any detailed reflection on the use of oral history, the interviews provide a source of description and anecdote, and even in this capacity they play a relatively small part in the text. This is a pity, because the opinions of working-class young women have so often been drowned out by the views of journalists and do-gooders. When they do get a chance to speak, the interviewees’ recollections tend to be sweetly staid: memories of reading boarding-school stories at the public library; scribbling down the lyrics of their idol’s latest song; pie-and-mash suppers after a night out dancing.

Clare Griffiths is professor of modern history at Cardiff University.

Jabotinsky's Children: Polish Jews and the Rise of Right-Wing Zionism

By Daniel Kupfert Heller
Princeton University Press
352pp, £27.95
ISBN 9780691174754
Published 12 September 2017

On New Year's Day 1929, in one of Europe's great capital cities, and to the sound of trumpets and drums, hundreds of young people in uniform marched to an imposing place of worship, there to listen to a sermon extolling the many virtues of the organisation to which they belonged. At the conclusion of these ceremonies the many journalists present filed their stories. One noted that "Astonished, Jewish Warsaw watched the parade of Jewish fascists across the city." Another referred to the leader of the organisation as a "Jewish Mussolini", and to the heavily choreographed march in which they had participated (to Warsaw's Great Synagogue) as "their March on Rome". The organisation in question was known as *Betar*, and its leader was the Jewish soldier, orator and poet Vladimir Jabotinsky.

The event that so enraptured some Jews, but which angered so many more, was the opening ceremony of *Betar*'s first international conference. *Betar* was the name of the last Jewish fortress to hold out against the Romans in 136 CE. But it was also a Hebrew acronym – *Brit Yosef Trumpeldor* – referring to Joseph Trumpeldor, a close friend of Jabotinsky, who had been murdered by Palestinian Arabs at Tel Hai, in what became Mandate Palestine, in 1920.

Betar was founded by Jabotinsky in Riga, Latvia, in 1923, and from then until his death in New York 17 years later it served as a powerful weapon that he hoped would assist him in wresting control of the world Zionist movement from a leadership that he and his "Revisionist" followers regarded as far too accommodating to the British and in any case dangerously moderate.

Jabotinsky was no moderate. But was he a fascist, and was *Betar* really a collection of genuine Jewish fascists? These are questions that Daniel Kupfert Heller has set out to answer in a meticulously researched and elegantly crafted monograph, not the least virtue of which is its deep mining of sources in several languages across several continents.

As Heller admits, the answers depend in part on how one defines fascism. Members of *Betar* were certainly instilled with the cult of the leader (Jabotinsky) and with the supreme virtue of sacrifice for the greater good. *Betar* was – or at least became – militaristic in outlook, sometimes violently so.

> **"Jabotinsky was no moderate. But was he a fascist, and was Betar really a collection of genuine Jewish fascists?"**

But while at times severely autocratic, Jabotinsky was at heart a democrat, and if we find this apparent contradiction almost too much to swallow, it's as well to remember that during the 1920s even stalwarts of the British Labour Party could be heard muttering that a future Labour-controlled Parliament might be persuaded to pass enabling legislation giving sweeping powers to a socialist government.

Betar – in short – was a child of its time, and at that particular time Poland, from which it largely recruited, was home to 3 million Jews who were subject to daily harassment, economic and educational boycott and gratuitous violence – all at the behest of Catholic extremists and their government cheerleaders. Jabotinsky's answer was to meet violence with violence and even to instigate attack as the surest means of defence.

Had he been listened to, many more Jews might be alive now.

Geoffrey Alderman is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, working on a book about the Jewish contribution to crime in the UK since Cromwell.

MARGINALIA AND MISCELLANEA

A tell-all tale that omits the day job

Matthew Reisz, books editor

There are comparatively few really powerful memoirs by academics. Part of this comes down to the nature of the job. Who would want to read a detailed account of days spent in the library, filling in grant applications or peer-reviewing journal articles? There are some striking books describing careers of academic activism such as Lynne Segal's *Making Trouble: Life and Politics*, but much of that focuses on the 1960s and 1970s, before the era of heavier workloads and tighter management control.

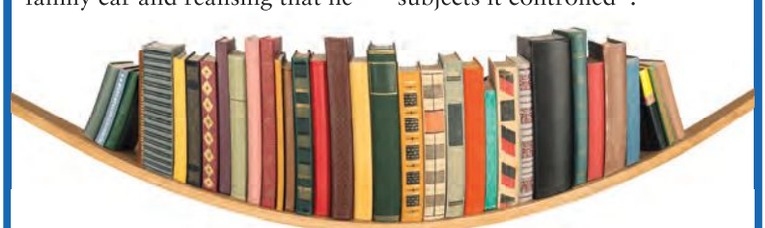
But there are also, of course, tensions between academic and confessional styles of writing. "I am not attracted to the confessional for its own sake," as the philosopher and social theorist Jonathan Dollimore puts it in *Desire: A Memoir* (recently published by Bloomsbury), "to be worth writing about the personal needs to have a meaning beyond me." This can easily be a trap for a writer. There are many awful books where someone devotes a couple of paragraphs to an unhappy relationship or a professional setback and then uses them as a peg for overblown reflections on alienation or neoliberalism.

Fortunately, *Desire* is not like that at all. Dollimore does offer his thoughts on some broad themes – the appeal of courting danger, gay cruising and promiscuity, the way depression can scar lives – yet in every case he also describes his own experiences with great vividness and often humour, and with the instincts of a true storyteller. The book opens with him as a teenager finding his mother with a man called Tony in the family car and realising that he was "trying to have sex with her". One of the things that made this tricky was that "Tony, an adult friend of my parents, was also having sex with me".

After this gripping start, Dollimore describes his drab childhood and how he turned his life around. From a working-class background, he had left school "barely literate" and gone to work in a car factory. Yet while he was recovering from a ghastly accident on a motorbike, "the euphoria of the hospital morphine" made him suddenly embrace an utterly unrealistic plan to become a writer. This led to a job on a local newspaper, where he survived only thanks to the kindness of two fellow journalists who "helped cover for my total incompetence", and then the decision to return to education.

Dollimore tells an extraordinary story of a day when he was determined to commit suicide but got distracted by some surviving spark of sympathy, which led him to help "an old woman with heavy shopping bags trying to cross the road". He describes waking up in a strange flat after a one-night stand, surrounded by empty bottles, spilled alcohol and overflowing ashtrays, and feeling a sudden desire to fix a sagging bookshelf. One reads on, endlessly fascinated by the strange details of his life.

But what about the day job? Dollimore opts to say virtually nothing about his very successful academic career – beyond noting that his writing has always grown out of "a deep dissatisfaction with the way the academic world smothered, tamed and domesticated the subjects it controlled".



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THE unijobs

EXECUTIVE FOCUS
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THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

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College of Science and Engineering

Chair in Technology Enhanced Science Education

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The successful candidate will be an exceptional leader of significant academic standing, possessing deep insight on the challenges and opportunities facing leading research-intensive universities. S/he will have outstanding communication skills with demonstrable ability to engage effectively with internal and external stakeholders. The successful individual will champion diversity and epitomise the values and culture of the University.

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For an informal discussion about the post, please do not hesitate to contact Bilal Hashmi - Infrastructure Group Manager b.hashmi@mdx.ac.uk 020 8411 5304.

Closing Date: 24th September 2017

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Closing date: 9 November 2017

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Closing date: 9 November 2017

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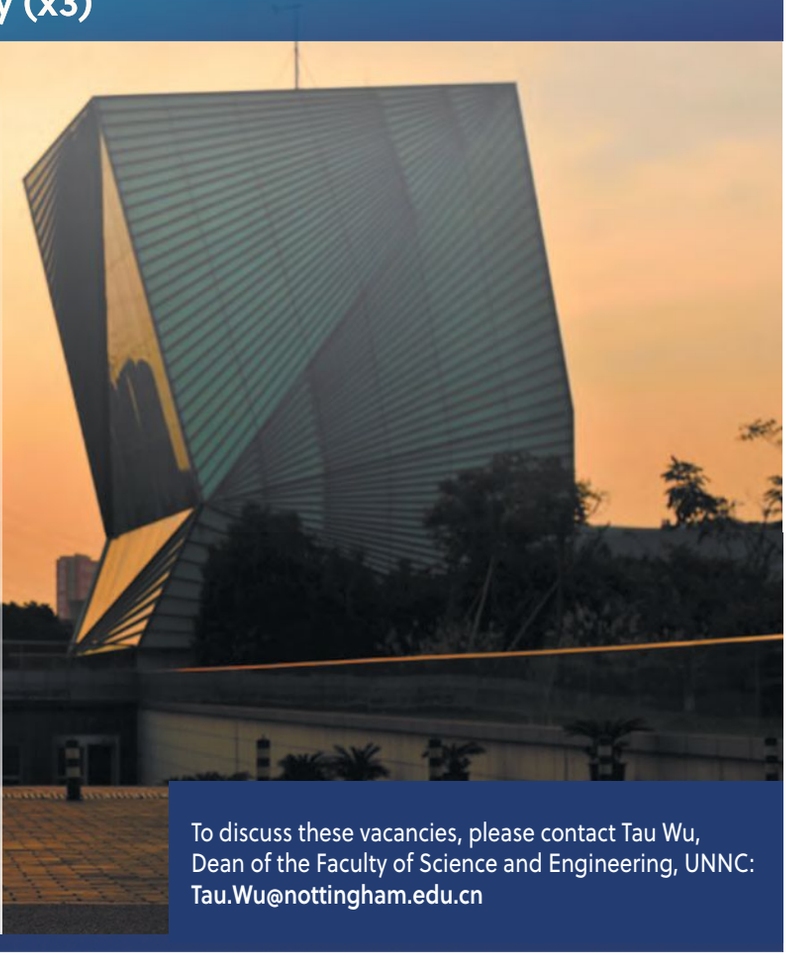

To discuss these vacancies, please contact Tau Wu, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering, UNNC: **Tau.Wu@nottingham.edu.cn**

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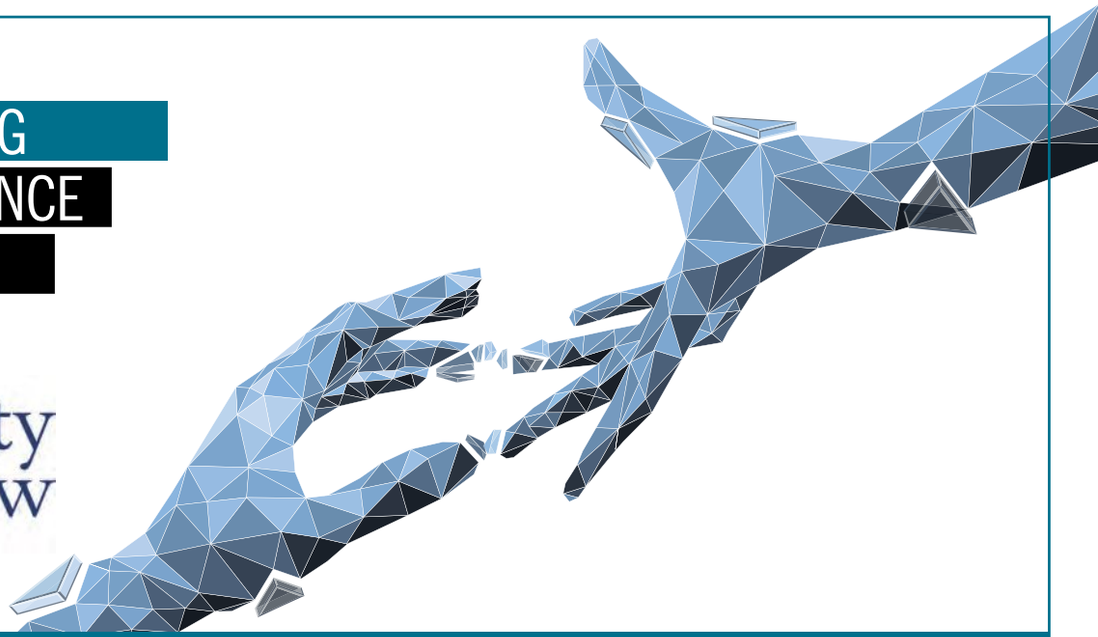

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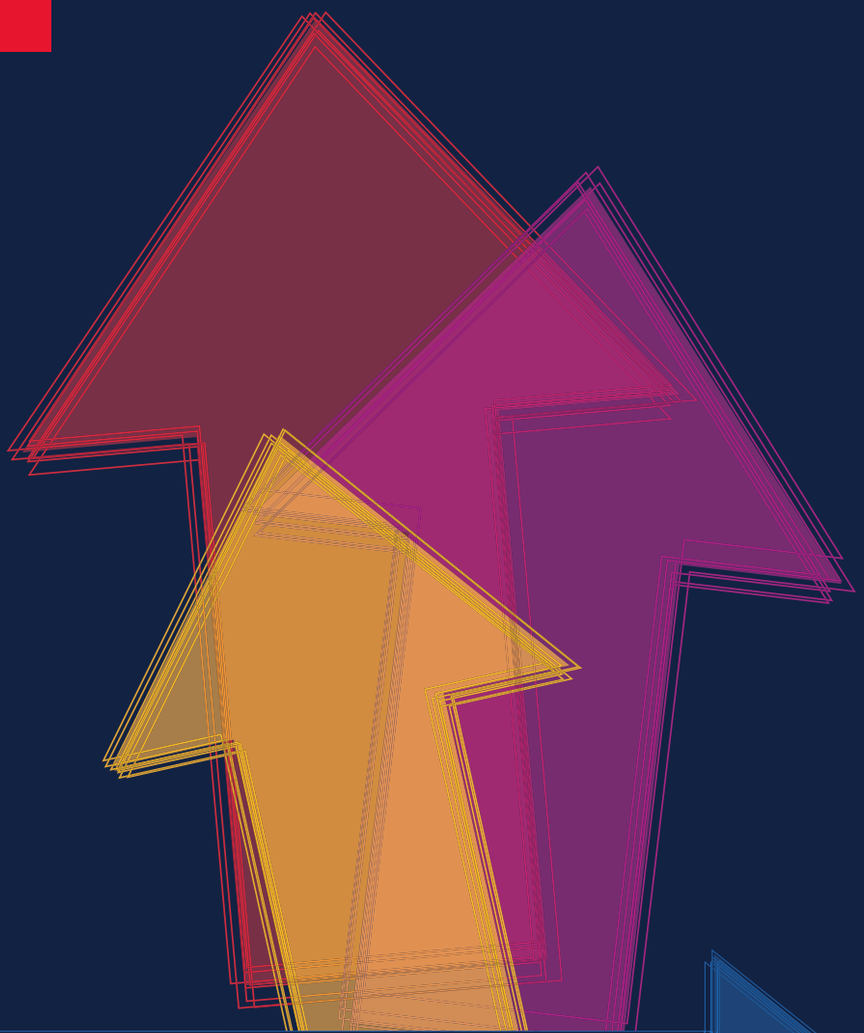

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Zombie studies and basket cases

Ridicule of "Mickey Mouse" university courses has become a summer staple of British tabloids that are starved of proper news during the silly season.

Sensational stories of slipping academic standards generally start to appear after A-level results day in August, with clickbait headlines about "degrees in David Beckham studies" or modules on Miley Cyrus and Beyoncé littering news websites well into the new academic year.

Criticism directed towards perceived curricular decline is as old as the academy itself. In AD1 Rome, Seneca lamented the slide from philosophy towards literary analysis, while the term "underwater basket-weaving" has long been used to belittle courses considered useless or absurd.

In 1919, one American commentator complained that higher education "includes everything nowadays – excepting, of course, Greek and Latin – from plumbing to basket-weaving"; in 1950, another criticised "courses in life-insurance salesmanship, bee culture, square-dancing, traffic direction, first aid, or basket-weaving".

A 1956 article in *American Philatelist* describes a fully submerged basket manufacture process used in a remote Alaskan community, although detractors in that decade were generally decrying sham classes set up by US universities for student athletes uninterested in academic study. Such classes apparently persist today; a recent independent investigation into one such scheme details a long-running class where students on the sports teams simply submitted any paper, of any quality, in exchange for a passing grade.

The subaqueous skill again entered popular parlance in the 1960s as young men enrolled at universities in droves to dodge the Vietnam War draft, and a number of universities have since sought to get in on the joke by offering one-off courses and taster sessions.

Meanwhile, in the UK, the University of Leicester used Back to the Future Day (21 October 2015 – the date that Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) travelled to in the 1985 film) to announce a degree in "transtemporal studies". The course promises "solid employment and steadily increasing wages for at least the next 50 years (apart from a brief recession in the late 2040s)".

Universities have also offered, without any hint of irony, courses entitled Zombies in Popular Media, How to Watch Television, and What if Harry Potter Is Real? (the wizarding world is "fertile ground for exploring…issues of race, class, gender, time, place, the uses of space and movement, [and] the role of multiculturalism in history").

In 2014, the University of Pennsylvania's English department began offering a course entitled Wasting Time on the Internet. The tutor insists that daydreaming and distraction are an integral part of the creative process, but admits that students are yet to produce much work of literary interest.

The critics are free to scoff, but our allegiance to academic freedom apparently requires us to accept that it is bound to produce some basket cases – subaqueous or otherwise.

Glen Wright blogs about the hidden, silly side of higher education at AcademiaObscura.com and tweets at @AcademiaObscura.

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